

THE WORKS

OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

THE WORKS



OF THE REV. JOHN WYLLIE





IN MEMORIAM

BY

LORD TENNYSON.



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# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.



STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
    They have their day and cease to be :  
    They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
    For knowledge is of things we see ;  
    And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
    But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
    That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
    We mock thee when we do not fear :  
    But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
    What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
    For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
    Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
    I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
    Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
    Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

## I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
    To one clear harp in divers tones,  
    That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
    And find in loss a gain to match?  
    Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
    Let darkness keep her raven gloss :  
    Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
    The long result of love, and boast,  
    " Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn."

## II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run ;  
A web is wov’n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands —  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own, —  
A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

## IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should’st fail from thy desire  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
“What is it makes me beat so low ?”

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

## V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold :  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI.

ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"  
That "Loss is common to the race" —  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.



That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more :  
Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, “ here to-day,”  
Or “ here to-morrow will he come.”

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking "this will please him best,"  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend,

## VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX.

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain ; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## X.

I HEAR the the noise about thy keel ;  
    I hear the bell struck in the night :  
    I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
    And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
    And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
    This look of quiet flatters thus  
    Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
    That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
    Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
    Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
    And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI.

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ? "  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
    A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
    And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
    A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
    And, where warm hands have prest and  
        closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
    An awful thought, a life removed,  
    The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
    I do not suffer in a dream ;  
    For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
    And glance about the approaching sails,  
    As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.



## XIV.

IF one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV.

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day :  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI.

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan?

## XVII.

THOU comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'TIS well ; 'tis something ; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX.

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

THE lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind :  
“It will be hard,” they say, “to find  
Another service such as this.”

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
“How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.”

## XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And makes them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak :  
“This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers, "Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:  
Ye never knew the sacred dust:  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged;  
And one is sad; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracks that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:



And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think, that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb ;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

#### XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
    Makes former gladness loom so great?  
    The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
    A glory from its being far;  
    And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein?

## XXV.

I KNOW that this was Life, — the track  
    Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
    And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
    As light as carrier-birds in air;  
    I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
    When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
    The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way;  
I with it; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

WITH such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time? They too will die.

## XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
" They rest," we said, " their sleep is sweet,"  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : " They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

“ Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.”

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

“ Where wert thou, brother, those four days ? ”  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.



## XXXII.

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

## XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good :  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house,  
"The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive :"  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
"The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI.

THO' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow :

“Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

“Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.”

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
“I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

“For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

“But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

“ I murmur’d, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp’d in truth reveal’d ;  
And loiter’d in the master’s field,  
And darken’d sanctities with song.”

, XXXVIII.

WITH weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho’ always under alter’d skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render’d free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

OLD warder of these buried bones,  
And answering now my random stroke  
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
To thee too comes the golden hour  
When flower is feeling after flower ;  
But Sorrow — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —  
What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.

## XL.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low ;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI.

THY spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.



Deep folly ! yet that this could be —

That I could wing my will with might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields

To that vague fear implied in death ;  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor

An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind

The wonders that have come to thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLII.

I VEX my heart with fancies dim :

He still outstript me in the race ;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,

And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?

## XLIII.

IF Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and more ;  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
(If Death so taste Lethean springs),  
May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that " this is I : "

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"  
And finds "I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

#### XLVI.

WE ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
The fruitful hours of still increase;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far ;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside ;  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good :  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
"Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light."

## XLVIII.

IF these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
    Were taken to be such as closed  
    Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
    She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
    What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
    But better serves a wholesome law,  
    And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
    But rather loosens from the lip  
    Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX.

FROM art, from nature, from the schools,  
    Let random influences glance,  
    Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## L.

BE near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves  
prick  
And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?  
There must be wisdom with great Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.



## LII.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

“ Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,”  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
“ Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

“ What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?  
What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

“ So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.”

## LIII.

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
    I can but trust that good shall fall  
    At last — far off — at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
    An infant crying in the night :  
    An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

## LV.

THE wish, that of the living whole  
    No life may fail beyond the grave,  
    Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
    That Nature lends such evil dreams ?  
    So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
    Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
    And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
    And falling with my weight of cares  
    Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI.

“So careful of the type?” but no.  
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, “A thousand types are gone:  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

“Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death:  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more.” And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law —  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII.

PEACE; come away : the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song :  
Peace; come away : we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come; let us go : your cheeks are pale ;  
But half my life I leave behind :  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined ;  
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
And " Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
" Adieu, adieu " for evermore.

## LVIII.

IN those sad words I took farewell :  
    Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
    As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
    Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
    Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : " Wherefore grieve  
    Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
    Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LIX.

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me  
    No casual mistress, but a wife,  
    My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
    Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
    And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LX.

HE past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by :  
At night she weeps, "How vain am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ?"

## LXI.

IF, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man ;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LXII.

THO' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;



And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII.

YET pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV.

DOST thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
“Does my old friend remember me?”

## LXV.

SWEET soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With " Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls ;

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVIII.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my  
breath;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not  
Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX.

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost:  
The streets were black with smoke and  
frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
    I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
    I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
    From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
    They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
    I found an angel of the night ;  
    The voice was low, the look was bright ;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
    That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
    The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXX.

I CANNOT see the features right,  
    When on the gloom I strive to paint  
    The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
    A gulf that ever shuts and gaps,  
    A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXII.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pain?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,



And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:  
I curse not nature, no, nor death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
    To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
    And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
    And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
    The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
    But somewhere, out of human view,  
    Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
    And in a moment set thy face  
    Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'  
    The secular abyss to come,  
    And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
    The darkness of our planet, last,  
    Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVII.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
    The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
    The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
    No wing of wind the region swept,  
    But over all things brooding slept  
The quite sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
    Again our ancient games had place,  
    The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
    No single tear, no mark of pain :  
    O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die !  
    No — mixt with all this mystic frame,  
    Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX.

“MORE than my brothers are to me,” —  
    Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
    I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
    As moulded like in Nature's mint ;  
    And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
    Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same  
    All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
    One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
    Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
    But he was rich where I was poor,  
    And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXX.

IF any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI.

COULD I have said while he was here,  
" My love shall now no further range ;  
There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
What end is here to my complaint?  
This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
“More years had made me love thee more.”

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
“My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat.”

## LXXXII.

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
For changes wrought on form and face ;  
No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks ;  
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth :  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.



## LXXXIII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet new-year delaying long;  
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV.

WHEN I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
    A central warmth diffusing bliss  
    In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
    For now the day was drawing on,  
    When thou should'st link thy life with or  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;  
    But that remorseless iron hour  
    Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
    To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
    I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
    Thy partner in the flowery walk  
    Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
    The lips of men with honest praise,  
    And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXV.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
    Demanding, so to bring relief  
    To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
    Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
    And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
    A faithful answer from the breast,  
    Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
    Till on mine ear this message falls,  
    That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
    That range above our mortal state,  
    In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
    And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
    All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were littl  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears:  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
" Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

" I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more."

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain? "

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
" 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI.

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare



The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and  
Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVII.

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown ;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same ; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
I linger'd ; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string ;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
    In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
    And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVIII.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
    Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
    O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
    Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
    And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude woe —  
    I cannot all command the strings ;  
    The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX.

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor  
    Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;  
    And thou, with all thy breadth and hei  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling  
courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the lifelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For "ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge" he said "in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man."  
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## XC.

HE tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where highest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands ;  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
Whatever change the years have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI.

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCII.

IF any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year;  
And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself; may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,



Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would  
hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone.

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time — the shocks of Chance —  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

“The dawn, the dawn,” and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
    Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
    Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
    The days she never can forget  
    Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
    He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
    Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
    He reads the secret of the star,  
    He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
    A wither'd violet is her bliss :  
    She knows not what his greatness is,  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
    Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
    She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
    She darkly feels him great and wise,  
    She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
"I cannot understand : I love."

## XCVIII.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
    And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
    When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
    That City. All her splendour seems  
    No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
    Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
    I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
    The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
    Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
    By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
    Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
    With statelier progress to and fro  
    The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,  
    He told me, lives in any crowd,  
    When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
    So loud with voices of the birds,  
    So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
    On yon swell'n brook that bubbles fast  
    By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
    A song that slights the coming care,  
    And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves;



Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## C.

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI.

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII.

WE leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, " Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, " Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
    To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
    They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CIII.

ON that last night before we went  
    From out the doors where I was bred,  
    I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
    And maidens with me : distant hills  
    From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
    They sang of what is wise and good  
    And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
    The shape of him I loved, and love  
    For ever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
    They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
    To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb ;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
    Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
    "We served thee here," they said, "so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win  
    An answer from my lips, but he  
    Replying, "Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:" they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
    A music out of sheet and shroud,  
    We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

#### CIV.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ;  
    The moon is hid, the night is still;  
    A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
    That wakens at this hour of rest  
    A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
    In lands where not a memory strays,  
    Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV.

To-NIGHT ungather'd let us leave  
    This laurel, let this holly stand :  
    We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
    And silent under other snows :  
    There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
    The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
    For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
    By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
    A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
    Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
    For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
    Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
    No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
    Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
    Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI.

RING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
    The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
    The year is dying in the night ;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
    Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
    The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
    For those that here we see no more ;  
    Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
    And ancient forms of party strife ;  
    Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
    The faithless coldness of the times ;  
    Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.



Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite ;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII.

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
    To darken on the rolling brine  
    That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
    To make a solid core of heat ;  
    Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
    With books and music, surely we  
    Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,  
    And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
    I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
    And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
    To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,  
    But mine own phantom chanting hymns ?  
    And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;  
  
Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;  
  
High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;  
  
A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;  
  
And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX.

THY converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI.

THE churl in spirit, up or down  
    Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
    To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
    His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
    Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act? but he,  
    To whom a thousand memories call,  
    Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
    Each office of the social hour  
    To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
    Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
    Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
    The grand old name of gentleman,  
    Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII.

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries  
And undulations to and fro.

## CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXV.

Now fades the last-long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.



Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
    Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
    And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
    For days of happy commune dead ;  
    Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVII.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this  
    To hold me from my proper place,  
    A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
    Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
    And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
    And every span of shade that steals,  
    And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was *born* to other things.

## CXXI.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXXII.

OH, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXIII.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamour made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;  
She did but look through dimmer eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:



And if the song were full of care,  
    He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
    And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail  
    To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
    And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI.

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,  
    And in his presence I attend  
    To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
    And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
    Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
    Who moves about from place to place,  
    And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
    Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
    Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
    And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
    The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
    And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
    They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
    The fortress crashes from on high,  
    The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;  
    While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
    O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVIII.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new;  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil cöoperant to an end.

## CXXIX.

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,  
    So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
    O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;  
    Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;  
    Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;  
    Loved deeper, darker understood ;  
    Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
    I hear thee where the waters run ;  
    Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
    But tho' I seem in star and flower  
    To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
My love is vaster passion now ;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI.

O LIVING will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

---

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years : they went and  
came,  
Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows,  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;  
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and again  
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.



O happy hour, behold the bride  
    With him to whom her hand I gave.  
    They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
    For them the light of life increased,  
    Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
    To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
    My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
    And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
    As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
    Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
    Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
    And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
    They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
    From little cloudlets on the grass,  
    But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
    And talk of others that are wed,  
    And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
    The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
    Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire :  
    Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
    And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
    Till over down and over dale  
    All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
    And catch at every mountain head,  
    And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
    With tender gloom the roof, the wall;  
    And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
    And, star and system rolling past,  
    A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
    Result in man, be born and think,  
    And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
    On knowledge; under whose command  
    Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
    For all we thought and loved and did,  
    And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
    This planet, was a noble type  
    Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

# THE LOVER'S TALE.



THE original Preface to "The Lover's Tale" states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—"The Golden Supper"?

*May, 1879.*

## ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

HERE far away, seen from the topmost cliff,  
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down rare sails,  
White as white clouds, floated from sky to sky.  
Oh ! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea  
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful love ;  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines that fledged  
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watcheth Love,  
In thine own essence, and delight thyself  
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.  
Keep thou thy name of " Lover's Bay." See,  
sirs,

Even now the Goddess of the Past, that takes  
The heart, and sometimes touches but one string  
That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes  
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd chords  
To some old melody, begins to play  
That air which pleased her first. I feel thy breath ;  
I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye :  
Thy breath is of the pinewood ; and tho' years  
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait  
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,  
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,

The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
To pass my hand across my brows, and muse  
On those dear hills, that never more will meet  
The sight that throbs and aches beneath my touch,  
As tho' there beat a heart in either eye ;  
For when the outer lights are darken'd thus,  
The memory's vision hath a keener edge.  
It grows upon me now — the semicircle  
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
Of curving beach — its wreaths of dripping green —  
Its pale pink shells — the summerhouse aloft  
That open'd on the pines with doors of glass,  
A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat that rock'd,  
Light-green with its own shadow, keel to keel,  
Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave,  
That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope !

They come, they crowd upon me all at once —  
Moved from the cloud of unforgotten things,  
That sometimes on the horizon of the mind  
Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in storm —  
Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me — days  
Of dewy dawning and the amber eves  
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
Were borne about the bay or safely moor'd  
Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the tide  
Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs ; and all without

The slowly-riding rollers on the cliffs  
Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro' the arch  
Down those loud waters, like a setting star,  
Mixt with the gorgeous west the lighthouse shone,  
And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love

Waver'd at anchor with me, when day hung  
From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy halls ;  
Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,  
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her lips,  
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
Leapt like a passing thought across her eyes ;  
And mine with one that will not pass, till earth  
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven, a face  
Most starry-fair, but kindled from within  
As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-hair'd, dark-  
eyed :

Oh, such dark eyes ! a single glance of them  
Will govern a whole life from birth to death,  
Careless of all things else, led on with light  
In trances and in visions : look at them,  
You lose yourself in utter ignorance ;  
You cannot find their depth ; for they go back,  
And farther back, and still withdraw themselves  
Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
Fresh springing from her fountains in the brain,  
Still pouring thro', floods with redundant life  
Her narrow portals.



Trust me, long ago  
I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me : I had died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,  
Thine image, like a charm of light and strength  
Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
On these deserted sands of barren life.  
Tho' from the deep vault where the heart of Hope  
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark —  
Forgetting how to render beautiful  
Her countenance with quick and healthful blood —  
Thou didst not sway me upward ; could I perish  
While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's quiet urn  
For ever? He, that saith it, hath o'erstept  
The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
And fall'n away from judgment. Thou art light,  
To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,  
And length of days, and immortality  
Of thought, and freshness ever self-renew'd.  
For Time and Grief abode too long with Life,  
And, like all other friends i' the world, at last  
They grew weary of her fellowship :  
So Time and Grief did beckon unto Death,  
And Death drew nigh and beat the doors of Life ;  
But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,  
A wakeful portress, and didst parle with Death,—  
“This is a charmed dwelling which I hold ;”  
So Death gave back, and would no further come.  
Yet is my life nor in the present time,

Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
The Present is the vassal of the Past :  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having been —  
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of place ;  
A body journeying onward, sick with toil,  
The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my heart,  
And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,  
Which long ago they had glean'd and garner'd up  
Into the granaries of memory —  
The clear brow, bulwark of the precious brain,  
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and all the while  
The light soul twines and mingles with the growths  
Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
Married, made one with, molten into all  
The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
Far from the diamond fountain by the palms,  
Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,  
Or when the white heats of the blinding noons  
Beat from the concave sand ; yet in him keeps  
A draught of that sweet fountain that he loves,  
To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit  
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
When I began to love. How should I tell you?  
Or from the after-fulness of my heart,

Flow back again unto my slender spring  
And first of love, tho' every turn and depth  
Between is clearer in my life than all  
Its present flow. Ye know not what ye ask.  
How should the broad and open flower tell  
What sort of bud it was, when, prest together  
In its green sheath; close-lapt in silken folds,  
It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
Yet was not the less sweet for that it seem'd?  
For young Life knows not when young Life was  
born,

But takes it all for granted: neither Love,  
Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember  
Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,  
Looking on her that brought him to the light:  
Or as men know not when they fall asleep  
Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
So know I not when I began to love.  
This is my sum of knowledge — that my love  
Grew with myself — say rather, was my growth,  
My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,  
My outward circling air wherewith I breathe,  
Which yet upholds my life, and evermore  
Is to me daily life and daily death:  
For how should I have lived and not have loved?  
Can ye take off the sweetness from the flower,  
The colour and the sweetness from the rose,  
And place them by themselves; or set apart  
Their motions and their brightness from the stars,  
And then point out the flower or the star?  
Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,

And tell me where I am? 'Tis even thus :  
In that I live I love ; because I love  
I live : whate'er is fountain to the one  
Is fountain to the other ; and whene'er  
Our God unknits the riddle of the one,  
There is no shade or fold of mystery  
Swathing the other.

Many, many years,  
(For they seem many and my most of life,  
And well I could have linger'd in that porch,  
So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place,)  
In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
The flush and dawn of youth, we lived together,  
Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,  
And he was happy that he saw it not ;  
But I and the first daisy on his grave  
From the same clay came into light at once.  
As Love and I do number equal years,  
So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
How like each other was the birth of each !  
On the same morning, almost the same hour,  
Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
(Oh falsehood of all starcraft !) we were born.  
How like each other was the birth of each !  
The sister of my mother — she that bore  
Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
With its true-touched pulses in the flow

And hourly visitation of the blood,  
Sent notes of preparation manifold,  
And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —  
My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
One twofold mightier than the other was,  
In giving so much beauty to the world,  
And so much wealth as God had charged her with —  
Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
Left her own life with it ; and dying thus,  
Crown'd with her highest act the placid face  
And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless  
And I without a father. So from each  
Of those two pillars which from earth uphold  
Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all  
The careful burthen of our tender years  
Trembled upon the other. He that gave  
Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd  
All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.  
He waked for both : he pray'd for both : he slept  
Dreaming of both : nor was his love the less  
Because it was divided, and shot forth  
Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome shade,  
Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister : on one arm  
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies

Wander'd, the while we rested : one soft lap  
Pillow'd us both : a common light of eyes  
Was on us as we lay : our baby lips,  
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,  
One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,  
Still larger moulding all the house of thought,  
Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps —  
All — all but one ; and strange to me, and sweet,  
Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er  
Our general mother meant for me alone,  
Our mutual mother dealt to both of us :  
So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,  
They tell me, was a very miracle  
Of fellow-feeling and communion.  
They tell me that we would not be alone, —  
We cried when we were parted ; when I wept,  
Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow ; that we loved  
The sound of one-another's voices more  
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and learn'd  
To lisp in tune together ; that we slept  
In the same cradle always, face to face,  
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,  
Folding each other, breathing on each other,  
Dreaming together (dreaming of each other  
They should have added), till the morning light  
Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane

Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke  
To gaze upon each other. If this be true,  
At thought of which my whole soul languishes  
And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath — as tho'  
A man in some still garden should infuse  
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull  
Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
It fall on its own thorns — if this be true —  
And that way my wish leads me evermore  
Still to believe it — 'tis so sweet a thought,  
Why in the utter stillness of the soul  
Doth question'd memory answer not, nor tell  
Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,  
Green prelude, April promise, glad new-year  
Of Being, which with earliest violets  
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
Fill'd all the March of life! — I will not speak of  
thee;

These have not seen thee, these can never know thee,  
They cannot understand me. Pass we then  
A term of eighteen years. Ye would but laugh,  
If I should tell you how I hoard in thought  
The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient crones,  
Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,  
Which are as gems set in my memory,  
Because she learnt them with me; or what use  
To know her father left us just before  
The daffodil was blown? or how we found

The dead man cast upon the shore? All this  
Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds  
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of mine  
Is traced with flame. Move with me to the event.

There came a glorious morning, such a one  
As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
On such a morning would have flung himself  
From cloud to cloud, and swum with balanced  
wings

To some tall mountain: when I said to her,  
“A day for Gods to stoop,” she answered, “Ay,  
And men to soar:” for as that other gazed,  
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,  
Suck’d into oneness like a little star  
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,  
When first we came from out the pines at noon,  
With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost  
Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,  
So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet  
Before or after have I known the spring  
Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
Into the middle summer; for that day  
Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged the winds  
With spiced May-sweets from bound to bound, and  
blew

Fresh fire into the sun, and from within  
Burst thro’ the heated buds, and sent his soul  
Into the songs of birds, and touch’d far-off  
His mountain-altars, his high hills, with flame  
Milder and purer.



Thro' the rocks we wound :  
The great pine shook with lonely sounds of joy  
That came on the sea-wind. As mountain streams  
Our bloods ran free : the sunshine seem'd to brood  
More warmly on the heart than on the brow.  
We often paused, and, looking back, we saw  
The clefts and openings in the mountains fill'd  
With the blue valley and the glistening brooks,  
And all the low dark groves, a land of love !  
A land of promise, a land of memory,  
A land of promise flowing with the milk  
And honey of delicious memories !  
And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,  
Each way from verge to verge a Holy Land,  
Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,  
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,  
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her brows  
And mine made garlands of the selfsame flower,  
Which she took smiling, and with my work thus  
Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice she told  
me

(For I remember all things) to let grow  
The flowers that run poison in their veins.  
She said, "The evil flourish in the world."  
Then playfully she gave herself the lie—  
"Nothing in nature is unbeautiful ;  
So, brother, pluck and spare not." So I wove  
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem, "whose flower,

'Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
Is without sweetness, but who crowns himself  
Above the naked poisons of his heart  
In his old age." A graceful thought of hers  
Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how like a nymph,  
A stately mountain nymph she look'd! how native  
Unto the hills she trod on! While I gazed  
My coronal slowly disentwined itself  
And fell between us both; tho' while I gazed  
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of bliss  
That strike across the soul in prayer, and show us  
That we are surely heard. Methought a light  
Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and stood  
A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
A light methought broke from her dark, dark eyes,  
And shot itself into the singing winds;  
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white robe  
As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call "The Hill of Woe."  
A bridge is there, that, look'd at from beneath  
Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven chasm.  
And thence one night, when all the winds were  
    loud,  
A woful man (for so the story went)  
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd himself  
Into the dizzy depth below. Below,

Fierce in the strength of far descent, a stream  
Flies with a shatter'd foam along the chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown with crags;  
We mounted slowly; yet to both there came  
The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking down  
On all that had look'd down on us; and joy  
In breathing nearer heaven; and joy to me,  
High over all the azure-circled earth,  
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself;  
And more than joy that I to her became  
Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky brows,  
Arise in open prospect — heath and hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,  
And steep-down walls of battlemented rock  
Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into spires,  
And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and steam of gold,  
And over all the great wood rioting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at intervals  
With falling brook or blossom'd bush — and last,  
Framing the mighty landscape to the west,  
A purple range of mountain-cones, between  
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding bursts  
The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point and standing both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from beneath  
Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,  
We paused amid the splendour. All the west  
And ev'n unto the middle south was ribb'd  
And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The sun below,  
Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave, shower'd  
down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of light  
Unparallel'd. On the other side, the moon,  
Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,  
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,  
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes  
To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,  
Since in his absence full of light and joy,  
And giving light to others. But this most,  
Next to her presence whom I loved so well,  
Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart  
As to my outward hearing: the loud stream,  
Forth issuing from his portals in the crag  
(A visible link unto the home of my heart),  
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh the sea  
Parting my own loved mountains was received,  
Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy  
Of that small bay, which out to open main  
Glow'd intermingling close beneath the sun.  
Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound  
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to thee:  
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it, and the  
earth  
They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd : our eyes met : hers were bright, and  
mine

Were dim with floating tears, that shot the sunset  
In lightnings round me ; and my name was borne  
Upon her breath. Henceforth my name has been  
A hallow'd memory like the names of old,  
A center'd, glory-circled memory,  
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
Exchange or currency : and in that hour  
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist  
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind shatter it,  
Waver'd and floated — which was less than Hope,  
Because it lack'd the power of perfect Hope ;  
But which was more and higher than all Hope,  
Because all other Hope had lower aim ;  
Even that this name to which her gracious lips  
Did lend such gentle utterance, this one name,  
In some obscure hereafter, might inwreath  
(How lovelier, nobler then !) her life, her love,  
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart and  
strength.

“ Brother,” she said, “ let this be call'd henceforth  
The Hill of Hope ; ” and I replied, “ O sister,  
My will is one with thine ; the Hill of Hope.”  
Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak : I could not speak my love.  
Love lieth deep : Love dwells not in lip-depths.  
Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,  
Constraining it with kisses close and warm,

Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.  
Else had the life of that delighted hour  
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
Of Love ; but how should Earthly measure mete  
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited Love,  
Who scarce can tune his high majestic sense  
Unto the thundersong that wheels the spheres,  
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
And flowing odour of the spacious air,  
Scarce housed within the circle of this Earth,  
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
Which pass with that which breathes them? Sooner  
Earth  
Might go round Heaven, and the strait girth of  
Time  
Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy hour,  
Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day !  
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
Thy coronal of glory like a God,  
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
Who walk before thee, ever turning round  
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
With dwelling on the light and depth of thine,  
Thy name is ever worshipp'd among hours !  
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
For bliss stood round me like the light of Heaven, —  
Had I died then, I had not known the death ;

Yea had the Power from whose right hand the light  
Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand floweth  
The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,  
Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air,  
Somewhile the one must overflow the other ;  
Then had he stemm'd my day with night, and  
driven

My current to the fountain whence it sprang, —  
Even his own abiding excellence —  
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had fall'n  
Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,  
Which seeming for the moment due to death,  
And dipping his head low beneath the verge,  
Yet bearing round about him his own day,  
In confidence of unabated strength,  
Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from light to light,  
And holdeth his undimmed forehead far  
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward hill ;  
We past from light to dark. On the other side  
Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,  
Which none have fathom'd. If you go far in  
(The country people rumour) you may hear  
The moaning of the woman and the child,  
Shut in the secret chambers of the rock.  
I too have heard a sound — perchance of streams  
Running far on within its inmost halls,  
The home of darkness ; but the cavern-mouth,  
Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,

Gives birth to a brawling brook, that passing lightly  
Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
Is presently received in a sweet grave  
Of eglantines, a place of burial  
Far lovelier than its cradle; for unseen,  
But taken with the sweetness of the place,  
It makes a constant bubbling melody  
That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower down  
Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding, leaves  
Low banks of yellow sand; and from the woods  
That belt it rise three dark, tall cypresses, —  
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,  
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,  
And sitting down upon the golden moss,  
Held converse sweet and low — low converse sweet,  
In which our voices bore least part. The wind  
Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd  
The waters, and the waters answering lisp'd  
To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,  
Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
To utterance of passion. Ye cannot shape  
Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
Methought all excellence that ever was  
Had drawn herself from many thousand years,  
And all the separate Edens of this earth,  
To centre in this place and time. I listen'd,  
And her words stole with most prevailing sweetness  
Into my heart, as thronging fancies come  
To boys and girls when summer days are new,



And soul and heart and body are all at ease :  
What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,  
And I was as the brother of her blood,  
And by that name I moved upon her breath ;  
Dear name, which had too much of nearness in it  
And heralded the distance of this time !  
At first her voice was very sweet and low,  
As if she were afraid of utterance ;  
But in the onward current of her speech,  
(As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
Are fashion'd by the channel which they keep),  
Her words did of their meaning borrow sound,  
Her cheek did catch the colour of her words.  
I heard and trembled, yet I could but hear ;  
My heart paused — my raised eyelids would not fall,  
But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,  
And saw the motion of all other things ;  
While her words, syllable by syllable,  
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
Fell ; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not to speak ;  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
What marvel my Camilla told me all  
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love —  
“ Perchance,” she said, “ return'd.” Even then the  
stars  
Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
No wish — no hope. Hope was not wholly dead,  
But breathing hard at the approach of Death, —

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
No longer in the dearest sense of mine —  
For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
And all the maiden empire of her mind,  
Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
There, where I hoped myself to reign as king,  
There, where that day I crown'd myself as king,  
There in my realm and even on my throne,  
*Another!* then it seem'd as tho' a link  
Of some tight chain within my inmost frame  
Was riven in twain: that life I heeded not  
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the grave,  
The darkness of the grave and utter night,  
Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,  
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

Then had the earth beneath me yawning cloven  
With such a sound as when an iceberg splits  
From cope to base—had Heaven from all her doors,  
With all her golden thresholds clashing, roll'd  
Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as dead,  
Mute, blind and motionless as then I lay;  
Dead, for henceforth there was no life for me!  
Mute, for henceforth what use were words to me!  
Blind, for the day was as the night to me!  
The night to me was kinder than the day;  
The night in pity took away my day,  
Because my grief as yet was newly born  
Of eyes too weak to look upon the light;  
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear

Frail Life was startled from the tender love  
Of him she brooded over. Would I had lain  
Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier had  
driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining brows,  
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
The wind had blown above me, and the rain  
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded snake  
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of Love,  
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All too soon  
Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,  
Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
Entering all the avenues of sense  
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.  
And first the chillness of the sprinkled brook  
Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd to hear  
Its murmur, as the drowning seaman hears,  
Who with his head below the surface dropt  
Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows  
His head shall rise no more: and then came in  
The white light of the weary moon above,  
Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
Was my sight drunk that it did shape to me  
Him who should own that name? Were it not well  
If so be that the echo of that name

Ringling within the fancy had updrawn  
A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
It should attach to? Phantom!—had the ghast-  
liest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
The foul steam of the grave to thicken by it,  
There in the shuddering moonlight brought its face  
And what it has for eyes as close to mine  
As he did — better that than his, than he  
The friend, the neighbour, Lionel, the beloved,  
The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,  
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
O how her choice did leap forth from his eyes!  
O how her love did clothe itself in smiles  
About his lips! and — not one moment's grace —  
Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon my head  
To come my way! to twit me with the cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all her ways  
To him as me? Was not his wont to walk  
Between the going light and growing night?  
Had I not learnt my loss before he came?  
Could that be more because he came my way?  
Why should he not come my way if he would?  
And yet to-night, to-night — when all my wealth  
Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell  
Beggar'd for ever — why *should* he come my way  
Robed in those robes of light I must not wear,  
With that great crown of beams about his brows —  
Come like an angel to a damned soul,

To tell him of the bliss he had with God —  
Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
That scarce can wait the reading of the will  
Before he takes possession? Was mine a mood  
To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
Unspeakable? I was shut up with Grief;  
She took the body of my past delight,  
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for herself,  
And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
Never to rise again. I was led mute  
Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
I was the High Priest in her holiest place,  
Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as these well-  
nigh

O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he  
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm upstay'd.  
I thought it was an adder's fold, and once  
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,  
Being so feeble: she bent above me, too;  
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er of blight  
Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made  
The red rose there a pale one — and her eyes —  
I saw the moonlight glitter on their tears —  
And some few drops of that distressful rain  
Fell on my face, and her long ringlets moved,  
Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and brush'd  
My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
For in the sudden anguish of her heart

Loosed from their simple thrall they had flow'd  
abroad,

And floated on and parted round her neck,  
Mantling her form halfway. She, when I woke,  
Something she ask'd, I know not what, and ask'd,  
Unanswer'd, since I spake not ; for the sound  
Of that dear voice so musically low,  
And now first heard with any sense of pain,  
As it had taken life away before,  
Choked all the syllables, that strove to rise  
From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
From his great hoard of happiness distill'd  
Some drops of solace ; like a vain rich man,  
That, having always prosper'd in the world,  
Folding his hands, deals comfortable words  
To hearts wounded for ever ; yet, in truth,  
Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase,  
Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd  
More to the inward than the outward ear,  
As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the green  
Of the dead spring : but mine was wholly dead,  
No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.  
Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd wrong?  
And why was I to darken their pure love,  
If, as I found, they two did love each other,  
Because my own was darken'd? Why was I  
To cross between their happy star and them?  
To stand a shadow by their shining doors,

And vex them with my darkness? Did I love her?  
Ye know that I did love her; to this present  
My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did I love her;  
And could I look upon her tearful eyes?  
What had *she* done to weep? Why should *she*  
weep?

O innocent of spirit — let my heart  
Break rather — whom the gentlest airs of Heaven  
Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.  
Her love did murder mine? What then? She  
deem'd

I wore a brother's mind: she call'd me brother:  
She told me all her love: she shall not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought, awhile  
In battle with the glooms of my dark will,  
Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe  
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
As from a dismal dream of my own death,  
I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she lov'd,  
And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving made  
The happy and the unhappy love, that He  
Would hold the hand of blessing over them,  
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his bride!  
Let them so love that men and boys may say,  
“Lo! how they love each other!” till their love  
Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
Known, when their faces are forgot in the land —

One golden dream of love, from which may death  
Awake them with heaven's music in a life  
More living to some happier happiness,  
Swallowing its precedent in victory.  
And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —  
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,  
They will but sicken the sick plant the more.  
Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,  
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do ;  
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but how  
I could have loved thee, had there been none else  
To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I spake,  
When I beheld her weep so ruefully ;  
For sure my love should ne'er indue the front  
And mask of Hate, who lives on others' moans.  
Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter draughts,  
And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold Hate,  
And Hate is strange beneath the roof of Love.  
O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these tears  
Shed for the love of Love ; for tho' mine image,  
The subject of thy power, be cold in her,  
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the source  
Of these sad tears, and feeds their downward flow.  
So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to death,  
Received unto himself a part of blame,  
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,  
Who, when the woful sentence hath been past,  
And all the clearness of his fame hath gone



Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,  
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom awaked,  
And looking round upon his tearful friends,  
Forthwith and in his agony conceives  
A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime —  
For whence without some guilt should such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the abysm  
Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,  
Who never hail'd another — was there one?  
There might be one — one other, worth the life  
That made it sensible. So that hour died  
Like odour rapt into the winged wind  
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built, that they,  
They — when their love is wreck'd — if Love can  
wreck —

On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride highly  
Above the perilous seas of Change and Chance;  
Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheerfulness;  
As the tall ship, that many a dreary year  
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at sea,  
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,  
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous wave.  
For me — what light, what gleam on those black  
ways  
Where Love could walk with banish'd Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair;  
Love's arms were wreath'd about the neck of Hope,

And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew in her  
breath

In that close kiss, and drank her whisper'd tales.

They said that Love would die when Hope was gone,

And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd after Hope ;

At last she sought out Memory, and they trod

The same old paths where Love had walk'd with

Hope,

And Memory fed the soul of Love with tears.

## II.

FROM that time forth I would not see her more ;  
But many weary moons I lived alone —  
Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.  
Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea  
All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,  
And sometimes on the shore, upon the sands  
Insensibly I drew her name, until  
The meaning of the letters shot into  
My brain ; anon the wanton billow wash'd  
Them over, till they faded like my love.  
The hollow caverns heard me — the black brooks  
Of the midforest heard me — the soft winds,  
Laden with thistledown and seeds of flowers,  
Paused in their course to hear me, for my voice  
Was all of thee : the merry linnet knew me,  
The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly  
Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
The rough brier tore my bleeding palms ; the hem-  
lock,  
Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I past ;  
Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,  
Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end?  
Why grew we then together in one plot?  
Why fed we from one fountain? drew one sun?  
Why were our mothers' branches of one stem?  
Why were we one in all things, save in that

Where to have been one had been the cope and  
crown

Of all I hoped and fear'd? — if that same nearness  
Were father to this distance, and that *one*  
Vauncourier to this *double*? if Affection  
Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd out  
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill  
Where last we roam'd together, for the sound  
Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the wind  
Came wooingly with woodbine smells. Sometimes  
All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-cones  
That spired above the wood; and with mad hand  
Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,  
I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,  
And watch'd them till they vanish'd from my sight  
Beneath the bower of wreathed eglantines:  
And all the fragments of the living rock  
(Huge blocks, which some old trembling of the world  
Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they fell  
Half-digging their own graves) these in my agony  
Did I make bare of all the golden moss,  
Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring  
Had liveried them all over. In my brain  
The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,  
As moonlight wandering thro' a mist: my blood  
Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs;  
The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,  
Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;

And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,  
As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.  
But over the deep graves of Hope and Fear,  
And all the broken palaces of the Past,  
Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
Above some fair metropolis, earth-shock'd, —  
Hung round with ragged rims and burning folds, —  
Embathing all with wild and woful hues,  
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses  
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
And fused together in the tyrannous light —  
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no more,  
Some one had told me she was dead, and ask'd  
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd  
To rise, and through the forest-shadow borne  
With more than mortal swiftness, I ran down  
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
The rear of a procession, curving round  
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of which  
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest lawn,  
Wreathed round the bier with garlands: in the distance,  
From out the yellow woods upon the hill  
Look'd forth the summit and the pinnacles  
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals  
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
Save those six virgins which upheld the bier,

Were stoled from head to foot in flowing black ;  
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his brow,  
And he was loud in weeping and in praise  
Of her, we follow'd : a strong sympathy  
Shook all my soul : I flung myself upon him  
In tears and cries : I told him all my love,  
How I had loved her from the first ; whereat  
He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow drew back  
His hand to push me from him ; and the face,  
The very face and form of Lionel  
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost brain,  
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,  
To fall and die away. I could not rise  
Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,  
The lordly Phantasms ! in their floating folds  
They past and were no more : but I had fallen  
Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Alway the inaudible invisible thought,  
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
Shaped by the audible and visible,  
Moulded the audible and visible ;  
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and wind,  
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain ;  
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,  
The mountain, the three cypresses, the cave,  
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the moon  
Below black firs, when silent-creeping winds  
Laid the long night in silver streaks and bars,  
Were wrought into the tissue of my dream :  
The moanings in the forest, the loud brook,

Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dorhawk-whirr  
Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to me  
And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
Like sounds without the twilight realm of dreams,  
Which wander round the bases of the hills,  
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves of sleep,  
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
To caves and shows of Death: whether the mind,  
With some revenge — even to itself unknown, —  
Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering view'd had been  
Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed Spirit,  
Being blunted in the Present, grew at length  
Prophetical and prescient of whate'er  
The Future had in store: or that which most  
Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
Was of so wide a compass it took in  
All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow  
Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
Of silver-chorded tones: her lips were sunder'd  
With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke in light  
Like morning from her eyes — her eloquent eyes,

(As I have seen them many a hundred times)  
Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine down  
rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendours. As a vision  
Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
In damp and dismal dungeons underground,  
Confined on points of faith, when strength is  
shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse  
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,  
And with the excess of sweetness and of awe,  
Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run over  
Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes  
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever stood  
Within the magic cirque of memory,  
Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
The edict of the will to reassume  
The semblance of those rare realities  
Of which they were the mirrors. Now the light  
Which was their life, burst through the cloud of  
thought  
Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room  
Within the summer-house of which I spake,  
Hung round with paintings of the sea, and one  
A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin wind  
In her sail roaring. From the outer day,



Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad  
And solid beam of isolated light,  
Crowded with driving atomies, and fell  
Slanting upon that picture, from prime youth  
Well-known well-loved. She drew it long ago  
Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,  
One morning when the upblown billow ran  
Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had pour'd  
Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
Colour and life: it was a bond and seal  
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles;  
A monument of childhood and of love;  
The poesy of childhood; my lost love  
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it together  
In mute and glad remembrance, and each heart  
Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing like  
The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-couch'd —  
A beauty which is death; when all at once  
That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
Began to heave upon that painted sea;  
An earthquake, my loud heart-beats, made the  
ground  
Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life  
And breath and motion, past and flow'd away  
To those unreal billows: round and round  
A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty gyres  
Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-driven  
Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she shriek'd;  
My heart was cloven with pain; I wound my arms  
About her: we whirl'd giddily; the wind

Sung ; but I clasp'd her without fear : her weight  
Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim eyes,  
And parted lips which drank her breath, down-hung  
The jaws of Death : I, groaning, from me flung  
Her empty phantom : all the sway and whirl  
Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I  
Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and ever.

## III.

I CAME one day and sat among the stones  
Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave ;  
A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over  
The rippling levels of the lake, and blew  
Coolness and moisture and all smells of bud  
And foliage from the dark and dripping woods  
Upon my fever'd brows that shook and throbb'd  
From temple unto temple. To what height  
The day had grown I know not. Then came on  
me

The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his brow.  
Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell  
Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the shore  
Sloped into louder surf: those that went with me,  
And those that held the bier before my face,  
Moved with one spirit round about the bay,  
Trod swifter steps ; and while I walk'd with these  
In marvel at that gradual change, I thought  
Four bells instead of one began to ring,  
Four merry bells, four merry marriage-bells,  
In clanging cadence jangling peal on peal —  
A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.  
Then those who led the van, and those in rear,

Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bacchanals  
Fled onward to the steeple in the woods :  
I, too, was borne along and felt the blast  
Beat on my heaved eyelids : all at once  
The front rank made a sudden halt ; the bells  
Lapsed into frightful stillness ; the surge fell  
From thunder into whispers ; those six maids  
With shrieks and ringing laughter on the sand  
Threw down the bier ; the woods upon the hill  
Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping down  
Took the edges of the pall, and blew it far  
Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
Over the sounding seas : I turn'd : my heart  
Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,  
Waiting to see the settled countenance  
Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading flowers.  
But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
My sister, and my cousin, and my love,  
Leapt lightly clad in bridal white — her hair  
Studded with one rich Provence rose — a light  
Of smiling welcome round her lips — her eyes  
And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd the  
hill.

One hand she reach'd to those that came behind,  
And while I mused nor yet endured to take  
So rich a prize, the man who stood with me  
Stept gaily forward, throwing down his robes,  
And claspt her hand in his : again the bells  
Jangled and clang'd : again the stormy surf  
Crash'd in the shingle : and the whirling rout

Led by those two rush'd into dance, and fled  
Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,  
Till they were swallow'd in the leafy bowers,  
And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.

There, there, my latest vision — then the event !

## IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.<sup>1</sup>

(*Another speaks.*)

HE flies the event : he leaves the event to me :  
Poor Julian — how he rush'd away ; the bells,  
Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and heart —  
But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
As who should say "Continue." Well he had  
One golden hour — of triumph shall I say?  
Solace at least — before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of his !  
He moved thro' all of it majestically —  
Restrain'd himself quite to the close — but now —

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-bells,  
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl  
Were wedded, and our Julian came again  
Back to his mother's house among the pines.  
But these, their gloom, the mountains and the Bay,

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna does  
The Giant of Mythology: he would go,  
Would leave the land for ever, and had gone  
Surely, but for a whisper, "Go not yet,"  
Some warning — sent divinely — as it seem'd  
By that which follow'd — but of this I deem  
As of the visions that he told — the event  
Glanced back upon them in his after life,  
And partly made them — tho' he knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look at her —  
No not for months: but, when the eleventh moon  
After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and said,  
Would you could toll me out of life, but found —  
All softly as his mother broke it to him —  
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
For that low knell tolling his lady dead —  
Dead — and had lain three days without a pulse:  
All that look'd on her had pronounced her dead.  
And so they bore her (for in Julian's land  
They never nail a dumb head up in elm),  
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,  
And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die: he is here and  
hale —

Not plunge headforemost from the mountain there,  
And leave the name of Lover's Leap: not he:  
He knew the meaning of the whisper now,  
Thought that he knew it. "This, I stay'd for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so long.  
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
I will be all alone with all I love,  
And kiss her on the lips. She is his no more;  
The dead returns to me, and I go down  
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and entering the dim vault,  
And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
All round about him that which all will be.  
The light was but a flash, and went again.  
Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
His lady with the moonlight on her face;  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which the moon  
Struck from an open grating overhead  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass, to sleep,  
To rest, to be with her — till the great day  
Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,  
And raised us hand in hand." And kneeling there  
Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,  
Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,  
Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine —  
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her —  
He softly put his arm about her neck  
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death  
And silence made him bold — nay, but I wrong him.



He revered his dear lady even in death ;  
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,  
"O, you warm heart," he moan'd, "not even death  
Can chill you all at once:" then starting, thought  
His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep?  
Or am I made immortal, or my love  
Mortal once more?" It beat — the heart — it beat:  
Faint — but it beat: at which his own began  
To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd  
The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and now  
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly ministering,  
With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye that ask'd  
"Where?" till the things familiar to her youth  
Had made a silent answer: then she spoke  
"Here! and how came I here?" and learning it  
(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)  
At once began to wander and to wail,  
"Ay, but you know that you must give me back:  
Send! bid him come;" but Lionel was away —  
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.  
"He casts me out," she wept, "and goes" — a wail

That seeming something, yet was nothing, born  
Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,  
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial.

Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,  
"Oh yes, and you," she said, "and none but you?  
For you have given me life and love again,  
And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,  
And you shall give me back when he returns."  
"Stay then a little," answer'd Julian, "here,  
And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself;  
And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
No, not an hour; but send me notice of him  
When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love." And faintly she replied,  
"And I will do *your* will, and none shall know."

Not know? with such a secret to be known.  
But all their house was old and loved them both,  
And all the house had known the loves of both;  
Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary:  
And then he rode away; but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
There fever seized upon him: myself was then

Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour ;  
And sitting down to such a base repast,  
It makes me angry yet to speak of it —  
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile)  
And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush !  
But there from fever and my care of him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.  
For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,  
And waited for her message, piece by piece  
I learnt the drearier story of his life ;  
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,  
Found that the sudden wail his lady made  
Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her worth,  
Her beauty even? should he not be taught,  
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the soul :  
*That* makes the sequel pure ; tho' some of us  
Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I : and yet I say the bird  
That will not hear my call, however sweet,

But if my neighbour whistle answers him —  
What matter? there are others in the wood.  
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him crazed,  
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers —  
Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes alone,  
But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,  
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms!  
"Kiss him," she said. "You gave me life again.  
He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
His other father you! Kiss him, and then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his own  
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him  
By that great love they both had borne the dead,  
To come and revel for one hour with him  
Before he left the land for evermore;  
And then to friends — they were not many — who  
lived  
Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,  
And bad them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I never  
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a wood,  
Not such as here — an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ; and beneath,  
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven knows when,  
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,  
And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,  
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round in gold —  
Others of glass as costly — some with gems  
Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value — Ah heavens !  
Why need I tell you all ? — suffice to say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest : and they, the guests,  
Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's eyes  
(I told you that he had his golden hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
And that resolved self-exile from a land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than rich,  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall  
Two great funereal curtains, looping down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken

Some years before, and falling hid the frame.  
And just above the parting was a lamp :  
So the sweet figure folded round with night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we ate and drank,  
And might — the wines being of such nobleness —  
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about it all :  
What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever and anon  
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use ;  
And when the feast was near an end, he said :

“ There is a custom in the Orient, friends —  
I read of it in Persia — when a man  
Will honour those who feast with him, he brings  
And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
This custom —— ”

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with meeting hands  
And cries about the banquet — “ Beautiful !  
Who could desire more beauty at a feast? ”

The lover answer'd, “ There is more than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
Before my time, but hear me to the close.  
This custom steps yet further when the guest

Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.  
For after he hath shown him gems or gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his heart —  
'O my heart's lord, would I could show you,' he  
says,  
'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose to-night  
To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
And my heart too.

“ But solve me first a doubt.

I knew a man, nor many years ago ;  
He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
His master more than all on earth beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on death,  
His master would not wait until he died,  
But bad his menials bear him from the door,  
And leave him in the public way to die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took him home,  
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his life.  
I ask you now, should this first master claim  
His service, whom does it belong to? him  
Who thrust him out, or him who saved his life? ”

This question, so flung down before the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at length  
When some were doubtful how the law would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of phrase.  
And he beginning languidly — his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming as he went,  
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
The service of the one so saved was due  
All to the saver — adding, with a smile,  
The first for many weeks — a semi-smile  
As at a strong conclusion — “body and soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work his will.”

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
To bring Camilla down before them all.  
And crossing her own picture as she came,  
And looking as much lovelier as herself  
Is lovelier than all others — on her head  
A diamond circlet, and from under this  
A veil, that seemed no more than gilded air,  
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze  
With seeds of gold — so, with that grace of hers,  
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
That flings a mist behind it in the sun —  
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,  
The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd  
With roses, none so rosy as himself —  
And over all her babe and her the jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them out  
As for a solemn sacrifice of love —  
So she came in : — I am long in telling it,



I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
Sad, sweet, and strange together — floated in —  
While all the guests in mute amazement rose —  
And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
Before the board, there paused and stood, her breast  
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
But him she carried, him nor lights nor feast  
Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ; who cared  
Only to use his own, and staring wide  
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world  
About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

“My guests,” said Julian : “you are honour'd  
now

Ev'n to the uttermost : in her behold  
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.”  
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,  
And heard him muttering, “So like, so like ;  
She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers — O God, so like !”  
And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.  
She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was dumb.  
And then some other question'd if she came  
From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.

Another, if the boy were hers : but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a word,  
Which made the amazement more, till one of them  
Said, shuddering, " Her spectre ! " But his friend  
Replied, in half a whisper, " Not at least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb ! "

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all :  
" She is but dumb, because in her you see  
That faithful servant whom we spoke about,  
Obedient to her second master now ;  
Which will not last. I have here to-night a guest  
So bound to me by common love and loss —  
What ! shall I bind him more ? in his behalf,  
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest to me,  
Not only showing ? and he himself pronounced  
That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

" Now all be dumb, and promise all of you  
Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my heart."  
And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily —  
The passionate moment would not suffer that —  
Past thro' his visions to the burial ; thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his own hall :  
And then rose up, and with him all his guests  
Once more as by enchantment ; all but he,

Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
And sat as if in chains — to whom he said :

“ Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife ;  
And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring her back :  
I leave this land for ever.” Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,  
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.  
And there the widower husband and dead wife  
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather seem'd  
For some new death than for a life renew'd ;  
Whereat the very babe began to wail ;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and brought him in  
To their charm'd circle, and, half killing him  
With kisses, round him closed and claspt again.  
But Lionel, when at last he freed himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks — the sight of this  
So frightened our good friend, that turning to me  
And saying, “ It is over : let us go ” —  
There were our horses ready at the doors —  
We bad them no farewell, but mounting these  
He past for ever from his native land ;  
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

TO  
ALFRED TENNYSON,  
MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,  
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,  
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.  
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

# BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.



## THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

### I.

“WAIT a little,” you say, “you are sure it’ll all come right,”

But the boy was born i’ trouble, an’ looks so wan  
an’ so white :

Wait! an’ once I ha’ waited — I hadn’t to wait for  
long.

Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. — No, no, you are  
doing me wrong!

Harry and I were married : the boy can hold up his  
head,

The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was  
dead ;

I ha’ worked for him fifteen years, an’ I work an’ I  
wait to the end.

I am all alone in the world, an’ you are my only  
friend.

## II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.

When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife ;

I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,

An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play ;

He workt me the daisy chain — he made me the cowslip ball,

He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better than all.

Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,

I never could quarrel with Harry — I had but to look in his face.

## III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need

Of a good stout lad at his farm ; he sent, an' the father agreed ;

So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years ;

I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.

The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing the bell,

"I'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little Nell."

## IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm ;  
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up  
at the farm,  
One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin  
an' her shame,  
And so she was wicked with Harry ; the girl was the  
most to blame.

## V.

And years went over till I that was little had grown  
so tall,  
The men would say of the maids, " Our Nelly's the  
flower of 'em all."  
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught myself all I  
could  
To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry came  
home for good.

## VI.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy too,  
For I heard it abroad in the fields " I'll never love  
any but you ; "  
" I'll never love any but you " the morning song of  
the lark,  
" I'll never love any but you " the nightingale's hymn  
in the dark.

## VII.

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd at me  
sidelong and shy,

Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many years  
had gone by,  
I had grown so handsome and tall — that I might  
ha' forgot him somehow —  
For he thought — there were other lads — he was  
fear'd to look at me now.

## VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were married o'  
Christmas day,  
Married among the red berries, an' all as merry as  
May —  
Those were the pleasant times, my house an' my  
man were my pride,  
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sailing with  
wind an' tide.

## IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried the  
villages round,  
So Harry went over the Solent to see if work could  
be found;  
An' he wrote, "I ha' six weeks' work, little wife, so  
far as I know;  
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss you before  
I go."

## X.

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't he coming  
that day?



An' I hit on an old deal-box that was push'd in a  
corner away,  
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter along  
wi' the rest,  
I had better ha' put my naked hand in a hornets'  
nest.

## XI.

"Sweetheart" — this was the letter — this was the  
letter I read —  
"You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish  
I was dead —  
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you haven't done  
it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away, an' I with  
that I had."

## XII.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant times that  
had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my* quarrel — the  
first an' the last.

## XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that  
drove me wild,  
An' he told me all at once, as simple as any child,  
"What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my  
single life?  
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife ;

An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst." "Then," I said,  
"I'm none o' the best."

An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my love? Come,  
come, little wife, let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no need to make  
such a stir."

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said "You  
were keeping with her,

When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as  
before."

An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me  
more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, "Let  
bygones be!"

"Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I said, "when  
you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*—in her  
shame an' her sin—

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my  
lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I hate her—  
an' I hate you!"

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me  
black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so  
crazy wi' spite,

"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come  
right."

## XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd  
him, an' when he came in  
I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to  
the skin,  
An' I never said "off wi' the wet," I never said "on  
wi' the dry,"  
So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid  
me goodbye.  
"You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't  
true, you know;  
I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before  
I go?"

## XV.

"Going! you're going to her—kiss her—if you  
will," I said, —  
I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been  
light i' my head —  
"I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!" — I didn't  
know well what I meant,  
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face  
an' he went.

## XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, "I've gotten my work  
to do;  
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved  
any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she  
wrote,  
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by  
the boat."

## XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out  
at sea,  
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind  
to me.  
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come  
right" —  
An' the boat went down that night — the boat went  
down that night.

## RIZPAH.

17—.

## I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and  
sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come  
out to me."

Why should he call me to-night, when he knows  
that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and the full  
moon stares at the snow.

## II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us  
out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing  
over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by  
the creak of the chain,

And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself  
drenched with the rain.

## III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what was there left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones,  
I have hidden them all.

What am I saying? and what are *you*? do you come as a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

## IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you — what have you heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.

O — to pray with me — yes — a lady — none of their spies —

But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

## V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,

The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep — you were only made for the day.

I have gather'd my baby together — and now you may go your way.

## VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.

"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child —

"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild —

And idle — and couldn't be idle — my Willy — he never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

## VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;

And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done

He flung it among his fellows — I'll none of it, said my son.

## VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,

God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd  
him for robbing the mail.  
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had al-  
ways borne a good name—  
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—  
isn't that enough shame?  
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they  
set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could stare at him,  
passing by.  
God 'ill pardon the hell-back raven and horrible  
fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him  
and hang'd him there.

## IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my  
last goodbye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. "O mother!"  
I heard him cry.  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something  
further to say,  
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced  
me away.

## X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy  
that was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me  
down on my bed.



“Mother, O mother!” — he call’d in the dark to  
me year after year —  
They beat me for that, they beat me — you know  
that I couldn’t but hear;  
And then at the last they found I had grown so  
stupid and still  
They let me abroad again — but the creatures had  
worked their will.

## XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone  
was left —  
I stole them all from the lawyers — and you, will you  
call it a theft? —  
My baby, the bones that had suck’d me, the bones  
that had laughed and had cried —  
Theirs? O no! they are mine — not theirs — they  
had moved in my side.

## XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss’d  
’em, I buried ’em all —  
I can’t dig deep, I am old — in the night by the  
churchyard wall.  
My Willy ’ill rise up whole when the trumpet of  
judgment ’ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy  
ground.

## XIII.

They would scratch him up — they would hang him  
again on the cursed tree.

Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know — let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will  
toward men —

“Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord” — let me  
hear it again ;

“Full of compassion and mercy — long-suffering.”  
Yes, O yes !

For the lawyer is born but to murder — the Saviour  
lives but to bless.

*He'll* never put on the black cap except for the worst  
of the worst,

And the first may be last — I have heard it in church  
— and the last may be first.

Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the Lord must  
know,

Year after year in the mist and the wind and the  
shower and the snow.

## XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he  
never repented his sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you*  
of his kin?

Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the  
downs began,

The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that  
'ill moan like a man?

## XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation — it's all very well.

But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.

For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,

And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy,  
I know not where.

## XVI.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire :

Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you may leave me alone —

You never have borne a child — you are just as hard as a stone.

## XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon ! I think that you mean to be kind,

But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind —

The snow and the sky so bright — he used but to call in the dark,

And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet — for hark !

Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is coming —  
shaking the walls —

Willy — the moon's in a cloud — Good-night. I  
am going. He calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

## I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a'  
sights <sup>1</sup> to tell.

Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an'  
well.

“Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon <sup>2</sup>!”  
Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors a' seëan  
an' a' doon;

“Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?” I 'a nowt but  
Adam's wine:

What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o'  
the line?

## II.

“What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?” I'll tell  
tha. Gin.

But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down  
to the inn.

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *aï*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craïin'*, *daïin'*, *whaï*, *aï* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in “wood.”

Naay — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha was iver  
sa dry,  
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell  
tha why.

## III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-  
end o' June,  
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a fiddle i'  
tune :  
I could fettle and clump owd booöts and shoes wi'  
the best on 'em all,  
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and  
Hutterby Hall.  
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as  
'art could think,  
An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to  
the drink.

## IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe  
shaämed on it now,  
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could  
sing a good song at the Plow ;  
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted  
my huck.<sup>1</sup>  
An' I coom'd neck-and-crop soomtimes slaäpe down  
i' the squad an' the muck :

<sup>1</sup> Hip.

An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor — not hafe ov a  
 man, my lad —  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like a cat,  
 an' it maäde 'er sa mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,<sup>1</sup> an' raäted  
 ma, "Sottin' thy braäins  
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'<sup>2</sup>  
 about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch thy 'at to  
 the Squire ;"  
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im  
 a-gittin' o' fire ;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as  
 a king,  
 Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brok-  
 ken string.

## V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths to keep the  
 wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink  
 the moor,  
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's  
 owd stockin' wur 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it  
 o' liquor, I did.

## VI.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose  
 at a faäir,

<sup>1</sup> Scold.<sup>2</sup> Lounging.

An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and teärin'  
'er 'aäir,  
An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I'd  
breäk ivry stick  
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a  
kick,  
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the  
babby beäl'd,<sup>1</sup>  
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal  
beäst o' the feäld.

## VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our  
Sally went laämed  
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful  
ashaämed;  
An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>2</sup> an' draggel taäil'd in an  
owd turn gown,  
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd an' the 'ole  
'ouse hupside down.

## VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally so pratty an' neät an'  
sweeät,  
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to  
feeät:  
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thurs-  
by thurn;

<sup>1</sup> Bellowed, cried out.<sup>2</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.



Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at  
murn,  
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher  
an' 'igher,  
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a  
sparkle o' fire.  
“Doesn't tha see 'im,” she axes, “fur I can see 'im?”  
an' I  
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er  
pratty blue eye;  
An' I says “I mun gie tha a kiss,” an' Sally says  
“Noä, thou moänt,”  
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally  
says “doänt!”

## IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at fust she wur  
all in a tew,  
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together like birds on  
a beugh;  
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an' the loov o'  
God fur men,  
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss  
ov 'ersen.

## X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as  
fell  
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw theer's naw  
drinkin' i' Hell;

Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf fro' the  
door,  
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as  
afoor.

## XI.

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blubber'd awaäy o'  
the bed —  
“Weänt niver do it naw moor;” an' Sally looökt  
up an' she said,  
“I'll upowd it<sup>1</sup> tha weänt; thou'rt like the rest o'  
the men,  
Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it  
agëan.  
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as knaws  
tha sa well,  
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll foller 'im  
slick into Hell.”

## XII.

“Naäy,” says I, “fur I weänt goä sniffin' about the  
tap.”  
“Weänt tha?” she says, an' mysen I thowt i' mysen  
“mayhap.”  
“Noä:” an' I started awaäy like a shot, an' down  
to the Hinn,  
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer, yon big  
black bottle o' gin.

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.

## XIII.

“That caps owt,”<sup>1</sup> says Sally, an’ saw she begins to  
cry,  
But I puts it inter ’er ’ands an’ I says to ’er, “Sally,”  
says I,  
“Stan’ ’im theer i’ the naäme o’ the Lord an’ the  
power ov ’is Graäce,  
Stan’ ’im theer, fur I’ll looök my hennemy straït i’  
the faäce,  
Stan’ ’im theer i’ the winder, an’ let ma looök at ’im  
then,  
’E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an’ ’e’s the Divil’s  
oän sen.”

## XIV.

An’ I wur down i’ tha mōuth, couldn’t do naw work  
an’ all,  
Nasty an’ snaggy an’ shaäky, an’ poonch’d my ’and  
wi’ the hawl,  
But she wur a power o’ coomfut, an’ sattled ’ersen o’  
my knee,  
An’ coäxd an’ coodled me oop till ageän I feel’d  
mysen free.

## XV.

An’ Sally she tell’d it about, an’ foälk stood a-gaw-  
min’<sup>2</sup> in,

<sup>1</sup> That’s beyond everything.

<sup>2</sup> Staring vacantly.

As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istance of a quart  
o' gin ;  
An' some on 'em said it wur watter — an' I wur  
chousin' the wife,  
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nobbut to  
saäve my life ;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is airm, an  
'e shaws it to me,  
“Feéal thou this! thou can't grow this upo' water!” says he.  
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as candles  
was lit,  
“Thou moänt do it,” he says, “tha mun breäk 'im  
off bit by bit.”  
“Thou'rt but a Methody-man,” says Parson, and  
laäys down 'is 'at,  
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, “but I respects  
tha fur that ;”  
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro' the  
'All to see,  
An' 'e spans 'is 'and into mine, “fur I respects  
tha,” says 'e ;  
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an'  
wide,  
And browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro' hafe  
the coontryside.

## XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan to my dying  
daäy ;

I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of a  
 waäy,  
 Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän  
 an' bright,  
 Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im  
 back i' the light.

## XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw  
 doubt:  
 But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.  
 Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to  
 taäste,  
 But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd feäl mysen  
 cleän disgraäced.

## XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, "My lass, when I  
 cooms to die,  
 Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's in 'im,"  
 said I.  
 But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally be left  
 aloän,  
 I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im afoor the  
 Throän.

## XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin' along the  
 streeät,  
 Doesn't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an' feät, an' neät,  
 an' sweeät?

Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost  
spick-span-new,  
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin wesh'd i'  
the dew.

## XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-goin to  
dine,  
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-puddin'<sup>1</sup> an' Adam's  
wine;  
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down  
to the Hinn,  
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä, not fur  
Sally's oän kin.

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

## THE REVENGE.

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

## I.

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville  
lay,

And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying  
from far away :

“ Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-  
three ! ”

Then sware Lord Thomas Howard : “ ’Fore God I  
am no coward ;

But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out  
of gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but fol-  
low quick.

We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-  
three ? ”

## II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : “ I know you  
are no coward ;

You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.  
But I’ve ninety men and more that are lying sick  
ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I left them, my  
Lord Howard,  
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of  
Spain."

## III.

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war  
that day,  
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer  
heaven ;  
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from  
the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And we laid them on the ballast down below ;  
For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not  
left to Spain,  
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of  
the Lord.

## IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship  
and to fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard  
came in sight,  
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather  
bow.  
" Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,



For to fight is but to die !

There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be  
set."

And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good  
English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of  
the devil,

For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

## v.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a  
hurrah, and so

The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of  
the foe,

With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety  
sick below ;

For half of their fleet to the right and half to the  
left were seen,

And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-  
lane between.

## vi.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their  
decks and laugh'd,

Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad  
little craft

Running on and on, till delay'd

By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen  
hundred tons,

And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning  
    tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

## VII.

And while now the great San Philip hung above us  
    like a cloud  
Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,  
Four galleons drew away  
From the Spanish fleet that day,  
And two upon the larboard and two upon the star-  
    board lay,  
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

## VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought her-  
    self and went  
Having that within her womb that had left her ill  
    content ;  
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought  
    us hand to hand,  
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and  
    musqueteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that  
    shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the land.

## IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far  
    over the summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and  
the fifty-three.

Ship after ship the whole night long, their high-built  
galleons came,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her  
battle-thunder and flame ;

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back  
with her dead and her shame.

For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and  
so could fight us no more —

God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the  
world before?

## X.

For he said "Fight on ! fight on !"

Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;

And it chanced that, when half of the short summer  
night was gone,

With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the  
deck,

But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly  
dead,

And himself he was wounded again in the side and  
the head,

And he said "Fight on ! fight on !"

## XI.

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out  
far over the summer sea,

And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round  
us all in a ring ;  
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd  
that we still could sting,  
So they watch'd what the end would be.  
And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,  
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate  
strife ;  
And the sick men down in the hold were most of  
them stark and cold,  
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the  
powder was all of it spent ; [side ;  
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the  
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,  
“ We have fought such a fight for a day and a night  
As may never be fought again !  
We have won great glory, my men !  
And a day less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die — does it matter when ?  
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split  
her in twain !  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of  
Spain ! ”

## XII.

And the gunner said “ Ay, ay,” but the seamen  
made reply :

"We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to  
let us go ;  
We shall live to fight again and to strike another  
blow."  
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to  
the foe.

## XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore  
him then,  
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard  
caught at last,  
And they praised him to his face with their courtly  
foreign grace ;  
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried :  
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant  
man and true ;  
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do :  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die !"  
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

## XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant  
and true,  
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so  
cheap  
That he dared her with one little ship and his Eng-  
lish few ;

Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught  
they knew,  
But they sank his body with honour down into the  
deep,  
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier  
alien crew,  
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her  
own ;  
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke  
from sleep,  
And the water began to heave and the weather to  
moan,  
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,  
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-  
quake grew,  
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their  
masts and their flags,  
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-  
shatter'd navy of Spain,  
And the little Revenge herself went down by the  
island crags  
To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar ; and by their clash,  
And prelude on the keys, I know the song,  
Their favourite — which I call “The Tables  
Turned.”

Evelyn begins it “O diviner Air.” - -

## EVELYN.

O diviner Air,  
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the glare,  
Far from out the west in shadowing showers,  
Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
Making fresh and fair  
All the bowers and the flowers,  
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
Over all this weary world of ours,  
Breathe, diviner Air !

A sweet voice that — you scarce could better that.  
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH.

O diviner light,  
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,  
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding showers,

Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and themselves!  
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,  
As one is somewhat graver than the other —  
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle, whom  
You count the father of your fortune, longs  
For this alliance: let me ask you then,  
Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt  
Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear  
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt  
Between the two — which must not be — which  
might

Be death to one: they both are beautiful:  
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?  
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.  
Woo her and gain her then: no wavering, boy!  
The graver is perhaps the one for you  
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.  
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.  
Not so: their mother and her sister loved  
More passionately still.

But that my best



And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,  
And that I know you worthy everyway  
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath  
To part them, or part from them : and yet one  
Should marry, or all the broad lands in your view  
From this bay window — which our house has held  
Three hundred years — will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,  
A hand upon the head of either child,  
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own  
Were silver, “get them wedded” would he say.  
And once my prattling Edith ask’d him “why?”  
Ay, why? said he, “for why should I go lame?”  
Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.  
For see — this wine — the grape from whence it  
flow’d

Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,  
When that brave soldier, down the terrible ridge  
Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,  
And caught the laming bullet. He left me this,  
Which yet retains a memory of its youth,  
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come!  
Here’s to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name: no fault of  
mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-time  
By change of feather: for all that, my boy,  
Some birds are sick and sullen when they moult.

An old and worthy name ! but mine that stirr'd  
Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
*I* care not for a name — no fault of mine.  
Once more — a happier marriage than my own !

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.  
The highway running by it leaves a breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,  
One bright May morning in a world of song,  
*I* lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The aërial poplar wave, an amber spire.

*I* dozed ; *I* woke. An open landaulet  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd  
Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.  
The face of one there sitting opposite,  
On whom *I* brought a strange unhappiness,  
That time *I* did not see.

Love at first sight  
May seem — with goodly rhyme and reason for it —  
Possible — at first glimpse, and for a face  
Gone in a moment — strange. Yet once, when first  
*I* came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm — one lightning-fork  
Flash'd out the lake ; and tho' *I* loiter'd there  
The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face for me.  
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.  
For look you here — the shadows are too deep,  
And like the critic's blurring comment make  
The veriest beauties of the work appear  
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown: the lips  
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith — no, the other, — both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro' sense and  
soul  
And by the poplar vanish'd — to be found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen  
boughs  
Of our New Forest. I was there alone:  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by: when one quick peal  
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades  
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith — all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,  
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me  
Call'd me to join them; so with these I spent  
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,  
The worse for her, for me! was I content?

Ay — no, not quite ; for now and then I thought  
Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright May,  
Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith — that a man's ideal  
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's God,  
Not findable here — content, and not content,  
In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his friend  
Drawn by an artist, looks at it and says,  
“ Good ! very like ! not altogether he.”

As yet I had not bound myself by words,  
Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
Edith love *me*. Then came the day when I,  
Flattering myself that all my doubts were fools  
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of all —  
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine —  
Had braced my purpose to declare myself :  
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
The golden gates would open at a word.  
I spoke it — told her of my passion, seen  
And lost and found again, had got so far,  
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell — I heard  
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors —  
On a sudden after two Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health again,  
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd — there,  
There was the face, and altogether she.  
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,  
The sisters closed in one another's arms,  
Their people throng'd about them from the hall,

And in the thick of question and reply  
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,  
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her ;  
I could not free myself in honour — Bound  
Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counterpressures of the yielded hand  
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,  
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes  
Upon me when she thought I did not see —  
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her  
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?  
Had I not dream'd I lov'd her yesternorn?  
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,  
Grew after marriage to full height and form?  
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there —  
Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of it —  
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —  
What end but darkness could ensue from this  
For all the three? So Love and Honour jarr'd  
Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise the full  
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down  
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote :

“My mother bids me ask” (I did not tell you —  
A widow with less guile than many a child.  
God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's  
As well as the plump cheek — she wrought us harm,  
Poor soul, not knowing) “are you ill?” (so ran

The letter) "you have not been here of late.  
You will not find me here. At last I go  
On that long-promised visit to the North.  
I told your wayside story to my mother  
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.  
Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind  
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks  
She sees you when she hears. Again farewell."

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so  
far

That I could stamp my image on her heart!  
"Pray come and see my mother, and farewell."  
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven  
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!  
What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity  
Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vexed myself  
And all in vain for her — cold heart or none —  
No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear  
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,  
Because the simple mother work'd upon  
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.

But on that day, not being all at ease,  
I from the altar glancing back upon her,  
Before the first "I will" was utter'd, saw  
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passionless —  
"No harm, no harm" I turn'd again, and placed  
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no word,  
She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung  
In utter silence for so long, I thought  
“What, will she never set her sister free?”

We left her, happy each in each, and then,  
As tho' the happiness of each in each  
Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,  
Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,  
To lift us as it were from commonplace,  
And help us to our joy. Better have sent  
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
To change with her horizon, if true Love  
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not live  
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world  
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day  
The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself  
In that assumption of the bridesmaid — she  
That loved me — our true Edith — her brain broke  
With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain  
To the deaf church — to be let in — to pray  
Before *that* altar — so I think ; and there  
They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.  
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once  
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd  
The morning of our marriage, past away :  
And on our home-return the daily want  
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
Haunted us like her ghost ; and by and by,  
Either from that necessity for talk  
Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence  
Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
Should earn from both the praise of heroism,  
The mother broke her promise to the dead,  
And told the living daughter with what love  
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of her,  
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the twins —  
Did I not tell you they were twins? — prevail'd  
So far that no caress could win my wife  
Back to that passionate answer of full heart  
I had from her at first. Not that her love,  
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,  
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous wail  
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my bride,  
Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd  
The very fountains of her life were chill'd ;  
So took her thence, and brought her here, and here  
She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd  
Edith ; and in the second year was born  
A second — this I named from her own self,  
Evelyn ; then two weeks — no more — she joined,



In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,  
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,  
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
One from the other, no, nor care to tell  
One from the other, only know they come,  
They smile upon me, till, remembering all  
The love they both have borne me, and the love  
I bore them both — divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the grave —  
I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith ; and her own true eyes  
Are traitors to her ; our quick Evelyn —  
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,  
And not without good reason, my good son —  
Is yet untouch'd : and I that hold them both  
Dearest of all things — well, I am not sure —  
But if there lie a preference eitherway,  
And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
“Most dearest” be a true superlative —  
I think / likewise love your Edith most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur New Squire  
coom'd last night.  
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll goä wi' tha back :  
all right ;  
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs  
be as well,  
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the  
shell.

## II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit : hev a glass o' cowslip  
wine !  
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was  
gells o' mine,  
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is dar-  
ters an' me,  
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took  
to she :  
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,<sup>2</sup> I liked 'er the fust  
on 'em all,  
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever  
at fall :

<sup>1</sup> See note to "Northern Cobbler."<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but Miss  
Annie she said it wur draäins,  
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd naw  
thanks fur 'er paäins.  
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer, I han't got-  
ten none!  
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an'  
owd Squire's gone.

## III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha dosn' knaw  
what that be?  
But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer ha tow'd  
it me.  
“When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by the fault o'  
that ere maäle —  
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the next un he  
taäkes the taäil.”

## IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony harm on  
'im lass? —  
Naay sit down — naw 'urry — sa cowl! — hev an-  
other glass!  
Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may happen a  
fall o' snaw —  
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but I likes to  
knaw.

An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt boooklarn'd: but 'e dosn'  
not coom fro' the shere;  
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we haätes  
boooklarnin' ere.

## V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt  
arter the land —  
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes — 'e 'ed hallus a booök  
i' 'is 'and,  
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo' seventy  
year.  
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou knaws thebbe  
neyther 'ere nor theer.

## VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils, an' the lawyer  
he towd it me  
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he couldn't cut  
down a tree!  
“Drat the trees,” says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em,  
my lass,  
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an' they sucks the  
muck fro' the grass.

## VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied to the  
tramps goin' by —  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi' hoffens a drop  
in 'is eye.

An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse  
to 'ersen,

An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was  
'untin' arter the men,

An' hallus a-dallackt<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin'  
new cloäthes,

While 'e sit like a graät glimmer-gowk<sup>2</sup> wi' 'is  
glasses athurt 'is noäse,

An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it couldn't be  
scroob'd awaäy,

Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a box  
in a daäy,

An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds  
wi' 'is gun,

An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it to  
Charlie 'is son,

An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e  
cotch'd the pike,

For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e didn't take  
kind to it like ;

But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry<sup>3</sup> owd book thutty  
pound an' moor,

An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I  
knew'd es 'e'd coom to be poor ;

An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much —  
fur an owd scratted stoän,

An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a  
brown pot an' a boän,

An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä, wi' good  
gowd o' the Queen,

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colours.

<sup>2</sup> Owl.

<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a  
shaame to be seen ;  
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed  
to owt,  
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an' booöks,  
as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

## VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep  
'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none of 'er  
darters 'ere ;  
But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an'  
me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em  
to tea.  
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o'  
their Missis's waäys,  
An' the Missisis talk'd o' the lasses. — I'll tell tha  
some o' these daäys.  
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er  
mother afoor —  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver derken'd my  
door.

## IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten a  
fright at last,

An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they  
foller'd sa fast;  
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im,  
meek as a mouse,  
"Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull  
goä to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou'll  
'elp me a bit,  
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve  
mysen yit."

## X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an'  
'e says to 'im "Noa.  
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I  
iver let goa!  
Coom! coom! feyther," 'e says, "why shouldn't thy  
booöks be sowd?  
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their  
weight i' gowd."

## XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, be-  
long'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i' the middle to  
kindle the fire;  
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to  
nowt at the saäle,  
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut  
off 'is taäil.

## XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e were that out-  
dacious at 'oäm,  
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell wi' a small-  
tooth coämb —  
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk wi' the  
farmer's aäle,  
Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e wouldn't cut off  
the taäil.

## XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a thurn be a-  
grawin' theer,  
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy es I see'd  
it to-year —  
Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it gied me a  
scare tother night,  
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the derk, fur  
it looökt sa white.  
“Billy,” says 'e, “hev a joomp!” — thaw the banks  
o' the beck be sa high,  
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw niver a  
hair wur awry;  
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an' Charlie 'e brok  
'is neck,  
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost 'is taäil  
i' the beck.

## XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur gone an' 'is  
boy wur deäd,



An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e niver not  
lift oop 'is 'eäd :

Hallus a soft un Squire ! an' 'e smiled, fur 'e hedn't  
naw friend,

Sa feyther an' son was buried together, an' this wur  
the hend.

## XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the mooney, but  
hes the pride,

'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the tother  
side ;

But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, howsiver they  
praäy'd an' praäy'd,

Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves their debts to  
be pääd.

Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor owd Squire  
i' the wood,

An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they weänt niver  
coom to naw good.

## XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi' a hoffi-  
cer lad,

An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse she be  
gone to the bad !

An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet'arts she niver  
'ed none —

Straänge an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy ! we naämed  
her “ Dot an' gaw one ! ”

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.

An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out ony harm  
i' the legs,  
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd as bald as one  
o' them heggs,  
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i' the mouth  
as a cow,  
An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>1</sup> lass, or she weänt  
git a maäte onyhow!  
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor my awn  
foälks to my faäce  
"A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to be larn'd  
her awn plaäce,"  
Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now be  
a-grawin' sa howd,  
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not fit to be  
towd!

## XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd Miss Annie  
to saäy  
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es soon es they  
went awaäy,  
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our  
Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,  
Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is gells es  
belong'd to the land;  
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere nor  
theer!  
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur huppuds o'  
twenty year.

<sup>1</sup> Emigrate.

## XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I hallus deal'd  
wi' the Hall,  
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they knaw'd  
what a hegg wur an' all;  
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they wasn't that eäsy  
to pleäse,  
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid big heggs  
es tha seesas;  
An' I niver puts saäme<sup>1</sup> i' *my* butter, they does it at  
Willis's farm,  
Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt do tha  
naw harm.

## XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an'  
owd Squire's gone;  
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my nightcap wur  
on;  
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd last  
night sa laäte —  
Pluksh!!<sup>2</sup> the hens i' the peäs! why didn't tha  
hesp the gaäte?

<sup>1</sup> Lard.

<sup>2</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.

*IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.*

EMMIE.

## I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen  
him before,  
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him  
come in at the door,  
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of  
other lands —  
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless  
hands!  
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but they said  
too of him  
He was happier using the knife than in trying to  
save the limb,  
And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse  
and so red,  
I could think he was one of those who would break  
their jests on the dead,  
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and  
fawn'd at his knee —  
Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that ever such  
things should be!

II.

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of our  
children would die

But for the voice of Love, and the smile, and the  
comforting eye—

Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd out  
of its place—

Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all but a  
hopeless case:

And he handled him gently enough; but his voice  
and his face were not kind,

And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and  
made up his mind,

And he said to me roughly “The lad will need little  
more of your care.”

“All the more need,” I told him, “to seek the Lord  
Jesus in prayer;

They are all his children here, and I pray for them  
all as my own:”

But he turn'd to me, “Ay, good woman, can  
prayer set a broken bone?”

Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I  
heard him say

“All very well—but the good Lord Jesus has had  
his day.”

III.

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It will  
come by and by.

O how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the  
world were a lie?

How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome  
smells of disease

But that He said "Ye do it to me, when ye do it to  
these"?

#### IV.

So he went. And we past to this ward where the  
younger children are laid :

Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek  
little maid ;

Empty you see just now ! We have lost her who  
loved her so much —

Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive plant to  
the touch ;

Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to  
tears,

Hers was the gratefulest heart I have found in a  
child of her years —

Nay you remember our Emmie ; you used to send  
her the flowers ;

How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to  
'em hours after hours !

They that can wander at will where the works of the  
Lord are reveal'd

Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out  
of the field ;

Flowers to these "spirits in prison" are all they can  
know of the spring,

They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft  
of an Angel's wing ;  
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin  
hands crost on her breast —  
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we  
thought her at rest,  
Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doctor said " Poor  
little dear,  
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow ; she'll never live thro'  
it, I fear."

V.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far as the  
head of the stair,  
Then I return'd to the ward ; the child didn't see I  
was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved and  
so vex't !  
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from her  
cot to the next,  
" He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie, what  
shall I do ? "  
Annie consider'd. " If I," said the wise little Annie,  
" was you,  
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for,  
Emmie, you see,  
It's all in the picture there : ' Little children should  
come to me.' "

(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it  
always can please

Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children  
about his knees.)

“Yes, and I will,” said Emmie, “but then if I call  
to the Lord,

How should he know that it's me? such a lot of  
beds in the ward!”

That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd  
and said :

“Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em  
outside on the bed —

The Lord has so *much* to see to ! but, Emmie, you  
tell it him plain,

It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the  
counterpane.”

## VII.

I had sat three nights by the child — I could not  
watch her for four —

My brain had begun to reel — I felt I could do it no  
more.

That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it  
never would pass.

There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail  
on the glass,

And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost  
about,

The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and  
the darkness without ;



My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the  
dreadful knife  
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would  
escape with her life ;  
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she  
stood by me and smiled,  
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to  
see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools : we believed her  
asleep again —  
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the  
counterpane ;  
Say that His day is done ! Ah why should we care  
what they say ?  
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie  
had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS  
ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that, which lived  
True life, live on — and if the fatal kiss,  
Born of true life and love, divorce thee not  
From earthly love and life — if what we call  
The spirit flash not all at once from out  
This shadow into Substance — then perhaps  
The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise  
From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm,  
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light,  
Ascends to thee ; and this March morn that sees  
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom  
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave,  
And thine Imperial mother smile again,  
May send one ray to thee ! and who can tell —  
Thou — England's England-loving daughter — thou  
Dying so English thou wouldst have her flag  
Borne on thy coffin — where is he can swear  
But that some broken gleam from our poor earth  
May touch thee, while remembering thee, I lay  
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the East?

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

### I.

BANNER of England, not for a season, O banner of  
Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-  
cry !  
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd  
thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of  
Lucknow —  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised  
thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

### II.

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we  
held with our lives —  
Women and children among us, God help them, our  
children and wives !  
Hold it we might — and for fifteen days or for twenty  
at most.  
“Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die  
at his post !”

Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the  
best of the brave :

Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him — we laid  
him that night in his grave.

“Every man die at his post!” and there hail'd on  
our houses and halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their  
cannon-balls,

Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our  
slight barricade,

Death while we stood with the musket, and death  
while we stoopt to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded,  
for often there fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their  
shot and their shell,

Death — for their spies were among us, their marks-  
men were told of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that  
could think for the rest ;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets  
would rain at our feet —

Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that  
girdled us round —

Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth  
of a street,

Death from the heights of the mosque and the  
palace, and death in the ground !

Mine? yes, a mine ! Countermine ! down, down !  
and creep thro' the hole !

Keep the revolver in hand ! you can hear him — the  
murderous mole !

Quiet, ah ! quiet — wait till the point of the pickaxe  
be thro' !

Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again  
than before —

Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer  
is no more ;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of  
England blew !

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it  
chanced on a day

Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap  
echo'd away,

Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many  
fiends in their hell —

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell  
upon yell —

Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.  
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder.  
Guard the Redan !

Storm at the Water-gate ! storm at the Bailey-gate !  
storm, and it ran

Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every  
side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily drown'd  
by the tide —

So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who  
shall escape?

Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are  
soldiers and men!

Ready! take aim at their leaders — their masses are  
gapp'd with our grape —

Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave  
flinging forward again,

Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they  
could not subdue;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

#### IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were English in  
heart and in limb,

Strong with the strength of the race to command, to  
obey, to endure,

Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung  
but on him;

Still — could we watch at all points? we were every  
day fewer and fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper  
that past:

“Children and wives — if the tigers leap into the fold  
unawares —

Every man die at his post — and the foe may outlive  
us at last —

Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to  
fall into theirs!”

Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy  
sprung

Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor  
palisades.

Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your  
hand be as true !

Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your  
flank fusillades —

Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to  
which they had clung,

Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive  
them with hand-grenades ;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another wild earth-  
quake out-tore

Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good  
paces or more.

Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the  
light of the sun —

One has leapt up on the breach, crying out : “ Fol-  
low me, follow me ! ” —

Mark him — he falls ! then another, and *him* too,  
and down goes he.

Had they been bold enough then, who can tell but  
the traitors had won ?

Boardings and rafters and doors — an embrasure !  
make way for the gun !

Now double-charge it with grape ! It is charged and  
we fire, and they run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face  
have his due!

Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us,  
faithful and few,

Fought with the bravest among us, and drove them,  
and smote them, and slew,

That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India  
blew.

## VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do.  
We can fight!

But to be soldier all day and be sentinel all thro' the  
night —

Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying  
alarms,

Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings  
and soundings to arms,

Ever the labour of fifty that had to be done by five,  
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left  
alive,

Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loop-  
holes around,

Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid  
in the ground,

Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract  
skies,

Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of  
flies,

Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an  
English field,



Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would*  
not be heal'd,  
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless  
knife, —  
Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could  
save us a life.  
Valour of delicate women who tended the hospital  
bed,  
Horror of women in travail among the dying and  
dead,  
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment  
for grief,  
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of re-  
lief,  
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that  
we knew —  
Then day and night, day and night, coming down  
on the still-shatter'd walls  
Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-  
balls —  
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade ! is it true what was told  
by the scout,  
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through  
the fell mutineers?  
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our  
ears !  
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,

Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,  
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,  
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,  
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!  
Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it you?  
Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!  
“Hold it for fifteen days!” we have held it for eighty-seven!  
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout  
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —  
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone ;  
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,  
For I am emptier than a friar's brains ;  
But God is with me in this wilderness,  
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms —  
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech ; not now to glean,  
Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,  
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —  
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that  
wagg'd

They said with such heretical arrogance  
Against the proud archbishop Arundel —  
So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here  
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd ;  
“ Bara ! ” — what use ? The Shepherd, when I speak,

Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard  
“Dim Saesneg” passes, wroth at things of old —  
No fault of mine. Had he God’s word in Welsh  
He might be kindlier : happily come the day !

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem  
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born ;  
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,  
Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek  
About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was — thou hast come to talk our isle.  
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all the world.  
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou bringest  
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I crost  
In flying hither ? that one night a crowd  
Throng’d the waste field about the city gates :  
The king was on them suddenly with a host.  
Why there ? they came to hear their preacher. Then  
Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham ;  
Ay, for they love me ! but the king — nor voice  
Nor finger raised against him — took and hang’d,  
Took, hang’d and burnt — how many — thirty-  
nine —

Call’d it rebellion — hang’d, poor friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics ! for your Priest  
Labels — to take the king along with him —  
All heresy, treason : but to call men traitors  
May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with household war,  
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,  
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —  
If somewhere in the North, as Rumour sang  
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line —  
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,<sup>1</sup>  
That were my rose, there my allegiance due.  
Self-starved, they say — nay, murder'd, doubtless  
dead.

So to this king I cleaved : my friend was he,  
Once my fast friend : I would have given my life  
To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives  
To save his soul. He might have come to learn  
Our Wiclif's learning : but the worldly Priests  
Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find  
What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,  
Urge him to foreign war. O had he will'd  
I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him,  
But he would not ; far liever led my friend  
Back to the pure and universal church,  
But he would not : whether that heirless flaw  
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,  
He leans on Antichrist ; or that his mind,  
So quick, so capable in soldiership,  
In matters of the faith, alas the while !

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,  
Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!  
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!  
Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!  
Lest the false faith make merry over them!  
Two — nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,  
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,  
Before thy light, and cry continually —  
Cry — against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword  
Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly boy;  
Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him  
Who gibed and japed — in many a merry tale  
That shook our sides — at Pardoners, Summoners,  
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries  
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine  
Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,  
Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink  
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling  
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits  
Of wine and harlotry — thy shame, and mine,  
Thy comrade — than to persecute the Lord,  
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel  
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks  
Into the suburb — their hard celibacy,  
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten  
Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
As holy Paul — a shame to speak of them —  
Among the heathen —

Sanctuary granted

To bandit, thief, assassin — yea to him  
Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to him,  
Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.  
The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to  
swine —

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,  
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.  
Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant  
To course and range thro' all the world, should  
be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church —  
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life  
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,  
O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here.

Here is the copse, the fountain and — a Cross!  
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.  
Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,  
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-tree!  
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn  
By this good Wiclif mountain down from heaven,  
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —  
No Latin — He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me  
 To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,  
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood  
 And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend  
 By this time should be with me.) "Images?"  
 "Bury them as God's truer images  
 Are daily buried." "Heresy. — Penance?" "Fast,  
 Hairshirt and scourge — nay, let a man repent,  
 Do penance in his heart, God hears him." "Her-  
 esy —

Not shriven, not saved?" "What profits an ill Priest  
 Between me and my God? I would not spurn  
 Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself  
 No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."

(My friend is long in coming.) "Pilgrimages?"

"Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances, vice.  
 The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.  
 Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?" —  
 "Heresy" —

(Hath he been here — not found me — gone again?  
 Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?) "Bread —  
 Bread left after the blessing?" how they stared,  
 That was their main test-question — glared at me!  
 "He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He veils  
 His flesh in bread, body and bread together."  
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,  
 "No bread, no bread. God's body!" Archbishop,  
 Bishop,

Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers, Parish-clerks —  
 "No bread, no bread!" — "Authority of the Church,  
 Power of the keys!" — Then I, God help me, I



So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days —  
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
 And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since  
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth  
 Into the church, had only prov'n themselves  
 Poisoners, murderers. Well — God pardon all —  
 Me, them, and all the world — yea, that proud  
 Priest,

That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,  
 That traitor to King Richard and the truth,  
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.

Amen !

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life  
 Be by me in my death.

Those three ! the fourth  
 Was like the Son of God ! Not burnt were they.  
 On *them* the smell of burning had not past.  
 That was a miracle to convert the king.  
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
 What miracle could turn ? *He* here again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Himself,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Himself,  
 And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn.  
 Burn ? heathen men have borne as much as this,  
 For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,  
 Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine ;  
 For every other cause is less than mine.  
 The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,  
 Her love of light quenching her fear of pain —  
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire ?

Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stomach'd! faint as I  
am,

God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes?

A thousand marks are set upon my head.

Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for it then!

Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,  
I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with  
thee?

I have not broken bread for fifty hours.

None? I am damn'd already by the Priest

For holding there was bread where bread was  
none —

No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?

Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.

I am not like to die for lack of bread,

For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

## COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord : in your raised brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit him  
Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet  
Before his people, like his brother king?  
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself  
To meet me, roar'd my name ; the king, the queen  
Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke  
The crowd's roar fell as at the " Peace, be still !"  
And when I ceased to speak, the king, the queen,  
Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,  
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice  
In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.  
And then the great " Laudamus " rose to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean ! chains  
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,  
As holy John had prophesied of me,

Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
Of Spain than all their battles ! chains for him  
Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's  
    mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise !

Chains ! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,  
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic queen —  
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Admirals we —  
Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
But our amends for all we might have done —  
The vast occasion of our stronger life —  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your Spain,  
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe  
Will suck in with his milk hereafter — earth  
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,  
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies :  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden guess  
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.  
No guess-work ! I was certain of my goal ;  
Some thought it heresy, but that would not hold.  
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a tent  
Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat :  
Some cited old Lactantius : could it be

That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men  
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,  
The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe  
Within the zone of heat; so might there be  
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean  
Against God's word: thus was I beaten back,  
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,  
And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal  
Once more to France or England; but our Queen  
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses  
Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved  
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,  
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet — not all — last night a dream — I sail'd  
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights  
Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.  
The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,  
The compass, like an old friend false at last  
In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind  
Still westward, and the weedy seas — at length  
The landbird, and the branch with berries on it,  
The carven staff — and last the light, the light  
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;  
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light  
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky  
Of dawning over — not those alien palms,

The marvel of that fair new nature — not  
That Indian isle, but our most ancient East  
Moriah with Jerusalem ; and I saw  
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,  
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
Jacynth, and amethyst — and those twelve gates,  
Pearl — and I woke, and thought — death — I shall  
die —

I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life  
To walk within the glory of the Lord  
Sunless and moonless, utter light — but no !  
The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me  
To mind me of the secret vow I made  
When Spain was waging war against the Moor —  
I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.  
There came two voices from the Sepulchre,  
Two friars crying that if Spain should oust  
The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce  
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and raze  
The blessed tomb of Christ ; whereon I vow'd  
That, if our Princes harken'd to my prayer,  
Whatever wealth I brought from that new world  
Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead  
A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes gold enough  
If left alone ! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been a Moor,

And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the Moor,  
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester John,  
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I brought  
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all  
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home,  
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue blood of Spain,  
Tho' quartering your own royal arms of Spain,  
I have not: blue blood and black blood of Spain,  
The noble and the convict of Castile,  
Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you know  
The flies at home, that ever swarm about  
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur down  
Truth in the distance — these outbuzz'd me so  
That even our prudent king, our righteous queen —  
I pray'd them being so calumniated  
They would commission one of weight and worth  
To judge between my slander'd self and me —  
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —  
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed — who sack'd  
My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed  
My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,  
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing, gave  
All but free leave for all to work the mines,  
Drove me and my good brothers home in chains,  
And gathering ruthless gold — a single piece  
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castellanos — so  
They tell me — weigh'd him down into the abysm —  
The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,

The seas of our discovering over-roll  
Him and his gold ; the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to the shore.  
*There* was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God

Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my lord,  
I swear to you I heard his voice between  
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,  
"O soul of little faith, slow to believe!  
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?  
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-sea?  
Set thee in light till time shall be no more?  
Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?  
Endure ! thou hast done so well for men, that men  
Cry out against thee : was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?"

And more than once in days

Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope  
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice,  
"Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,  
Fear not." And I shall hear his voice again —  
I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will —  
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,

I lying here bedridden and alone,  
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and king —  
The first discoverer starves — his followers, all



Flower into fortune — our world's way — and I,  
Without a roof that I can call mine own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum  
I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,  
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain  
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles —  
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,  
Their wives and children Spanish concubines,  
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in blood,  
Some dead of hunger, some beneath the scourge,  
Some over-labour'd, some by their own hands, —  
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill  
Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain —  
Ah God, the harmless people whom we found  
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise !  
Who took us for the very Gods from Heaven,  
And we have sent them very fiends from Hell ;  
And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen  
Smiles on me, saying, “ Be thou comforted !  
This creedless people will be brought to Christ  
And own the holy governance of Rome.”

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross  
Thither, were excommunicated there,  
For curbing crimes that scandalised the Cross,  
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,  
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe

These hard memorials of our truth to Spain  
Clung closer to us for a longer term  
Than any friend of ours at Court ? and yet  
Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,  
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's  
Own voice to justify the dead — perchance  
Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,  
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,  
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,  
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,  
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.  
Then some one standing by my grave will say,  
“ Behold the bones of Christopher Colòn ” —  
“ Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean — the  
chains ? ” —

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
Who then will have to answer, “ These same chains  
Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic  
sea,  
Which he unchain'd for all the world to come.”

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in Hell  
And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
As they do — for the moment. Stay, my son  
Is here anon : my son will speak for me  
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind  
Bone against bone. You will not. One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you tell  
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,  
Whose life has been no play with him and his  
Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,  
Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and condoned —  
That I am loyal to him till the death,  
And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,  
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,  
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,  
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,  
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,  
To whom I send my prayer by night and day —  
She is gone — but you will tell the King, that I,  
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with pains  
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet  
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,  
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead  
One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted : you have dared  
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks !  
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND. A.D. 700.)

## I.

I WAS the chief of the race — he had stricken my  
father dead —  
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would  
strike off his head.  
Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in  
birth as in worth,  
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest  
race upon earth.  
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero  
of song,  
And each of them liefer had died than have done  
one another a wrong.  
*He* lived on an isle in the ocean — we sail'd on a  
Friday morn —  
He that had slain my father the day before I was  
born.

## II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on  
the shore was he.  
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a  
boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had  
touch'd at before,  
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent  
shore,  
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without  
sound, and the long waterfalls  
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the  
mountain walls,  
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm  
flourish'd up beyond sight,  
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbe-  
lievable height,  
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a  
songless lark,  
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't  
low, and the dog couldn't bark.  
And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a mur-  
mur, a breath —  
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as  
death,  
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for whenever we  
strove to speak  
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flitter-  
mouse-shriek;  
And the men that were mighty of tongue and could  
raise such a battle-cry  
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thou-  
sand lances and die —  
O they to be dumb'd by the charm! — so fluster'd  
with anger were they

They almost fell on each other ; but after we sail'd  
away.

## IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we landed, a  
score of wild birds  
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices  
and words ;  
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their  
voices peal'd  
The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died  
from the field,  
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of  
the cattle went lame,  
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling  
broke into flame ;  
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the  
hearts of my crew,  
Till they shouted along with the shouting and seized  
one another and slew ;  
But I drew them the one from the other ; I saw that  
we could not stay,  
And we left the dead to the birds and we sail'd with  
our wounded away.

## V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers : their breath  
met us out on the seas,  
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat each on  
the lap of the breeze ;

And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and the  
dark-blue clematis, clung,  
And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long convol-  
vulus hung ;  
And the topmost spire of the mountain was lilies in  
lieu of snow,  
And the lilies like glaciers winded down, running  
out below  
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the blaze of  
gorse, and the blush  
Of millions of roses that sprang without leaf or a  
thorn from the bush ;  
And the whole isle-side flashing down from the peak  
without ever a tree  
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky to the  
blue of the sea ;  
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and vaunted our  
kith and our kin,  
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and chanted the  
triumph of Finn,  
Till each like a golden image was pollen'd from head  
to feet  
And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst in the  
middle-day heat.  
Blossom and blossom, and promise of blossom, but  
never a fruit !  
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we hated the  
isle that was mute,  
And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung  
them in bight and bay,

And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd  
away.

## VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all round from  
the cliffs and the capes,  
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of  
grapes,  
And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the  
tawny sand,  
And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted over  
the land,  
And the mountain arose like a jewell'd throne thro'  
the fragrant air,  
Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with golden  
masses of pear,  
And the crimson and scarlet of berries that flamed  
upon bine and vine,  
But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous pleas-  
ure of wine;  
And the peak of the mountain was apples, the hugest  
that ever were seen,  
And they prest, as they grew, on each other, with  
hardly a leaflet between,  
And all of them redder than rosiest health or than  
utterest shame,  
And setting, when Even descended, the very sunset  
aflame;  
And we stay'd three days, and we gorged and we  
madden'd, till every one drew



His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever they  
struck and they slew ;  
And myself, I had eaten but sparely, and fought till  
I sunder'd the fray,  
Then I bad them remember my father's death, and  
we sail'd away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire : we were lured by  
the light from afar,  
For the peak sent up one league of fire to the North-  
ern Star ;  
Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could  
stand upright,  
For the whole Isle shudder'd and shook like a man  
in a mortal affright ;  
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged,  
and so crazed that at last  
There were some leap'd into the fire ; and away we  
sail'd, and we past  
Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer  
than air :  
Down we look'd : what a garden ! O bliss, what a  
Paradise there !  
Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow  
deep  
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep !  
And three of the gentlest and best of my people,  
whate'er I could say,  
Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise  
trembled away.

## VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the  
    heavens lean low on the land,  
And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a  
    sunbright hand,  
Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man,  
    as he rose from his rest,  
Bread enough for his need till the labourless day  
    dipt under the West ;  
And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never  
    was time so good !  
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the  
    boast of our ancient blood,  
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by  
    the gurgle of springs,  
And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the  
    glories of fairy kings ;  
But at length we began to be weary, to sigh, and to  
    stretch and yawn,  
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sunbright  
    hand of the dawn,  
For there was not an enemy near, but the whole  
    green Isle was our own,  
And we took to playing at ball, and we took to  
    throwing the stone,  
And we took to playing at battle, but that was a  
    perilous play,  
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and  
    we sail'd away.

IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches and heard  
their musical cry —  
“Come to us, O come, come” in the stormy red of  
a sky  
Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the  
beautiful shapes,  
For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of  
the loftiest capes,  
And a hundred ranged on the rock like white sea-  
birds in a row,  
And a hundred gamboll’d and pranced on the  
wrecks in the sand below,  
And a hundred splash’d from the ledges, and  
bosom’d the burst of the spray,  
But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily  
sail’d away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the  
Double Towers,  
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over  
with flowers,  
But an earthquake always moved in the hollows  
under the dells,  
And they shock’d on each other and butted each  
other with clashing of bells,  
And the daws flew out of the Towers and jangled  
and wrangled in vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells rang into the  
heart and the brain,  
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took  
sides with the Towers,  
There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were  
more for the carven flowers,  
And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all  
the day,  
For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd  
away.

## XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd  
with St. Brendan of yore,  
He had lived ever since on the Isle and his winters  
were fifteen score,  
And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his  
eyes were sweet,  
And his white hair sank to his heels and his white  
beard fell to his feet,  
And he spake to me, "O Maeldune, let be this pur-  
pose of thine!  
Remember the words of the Lord when he told us  
'Vengeance is mine!'  
His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in single  
strife,  
Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each taken a life  
for a life,  
Thy father had slain his father, how long shall the  
murder last?

Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past to  
be Past."

And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and we pray'd  
as we heard him pray,

And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we sail'd  
away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown from, and  
there on the shore was he,

The man that had slain my father. I saw him and  
let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the trouble, the strife  
and the sin,

When I landed again, with a tithe of my men, on  
the Islè of Finn.

## DE PROFUNDIS:

## THE TWO GREETINGS.

## I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy light —  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,  
And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
With this last moon, this crescent — her dark orb  
Touch'd with earth's light — thou comest, darling  
boy;

Our own; a babe in lineament and limb  
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;  
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,  
Indissolubly married like our love;  
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men  
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life  
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may  
The fated channel where thy motion lives  
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course

Along the years of haste and random youth  
Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro' full man ;  
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,  
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

## II.

## I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that great deep, before our world begins,  
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that true world within the world we see,  
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —  
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun  
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

## II.

For in the world, which is not ours, They said  
“ Let us make man ” and that which should be man,  
From that one light no man can look upon,  
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons  
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost  
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign  
That thou art thou — who wailest being born  
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world  
Among the numerable-innumerable

Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space  
 In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil  
 And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,  
 Who made thee unconceivably Thyself  
 Out of His whole World-self and all in all —  
 Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape  
 And ivyberry, choose; and still depart  
 From death to death thro' life and life, and find  
 Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought  
 Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
 But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
 With power on thine own act and on the world.

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### THE HUMAN CRY.

#### I.

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halleluiah! —  
 Infinite Ideality!  
 Immeasurable Reality!  
 Infinite Personality!  
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

#### II.

We feel we are nothing — for all is Thou and in  
 Thee;  
 We feel we are something — *that* also has come  
 from Thee;  
 We know we are nothing — but Thou wilt help us  
 to be.  
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!



# SONNETS.



## PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE "NINETEENTH CENTURY."

THOSE that of late had fled far and fast  
To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill  
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
Have charter'd this ; where, mindful of the past  
Our true co-mates regather round the mast ;  
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast ;  
For some, descending from the sacred peak  
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world about ;  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek  
If any golden harbour be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

## TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew you best,  
Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth my rhymes,  
How oft we two have heard St. Mary's chimes!  
How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,  
Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!  
How oft with him we paced that walk of limes,  
Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden times,  
Who loved you well! Now both are gone to rest  
You man of humorous-melancholy mark,  
Dead of some inward agony — is it so?  
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!  
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:  
*Σκιᾶς ὄναρ* — dream of a shadow, go —  
God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

## MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,  
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,  
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night  
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales  
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,  
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight  
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight  
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.  
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne  
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm  
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own  
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm  
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

## TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,  
French of the French, and Lord of human tears ;  
Child-lover ; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance  
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance,  
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers ;  
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years  
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France !  
Who dost not love our England — so they say ;  
I know not — England, France, all man to be  
Will make one people ere man's race be run :  
And I, desiring that diviner day,  
Yield thee full thanks for thy full courtesy  
To younger England in the boy my son.

## TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

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### BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

CONSTANTINUS, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

#### I.

<sup>1</sup> ATHELSTAN King,  
Lord among Earls,  
Bracelet-bestower and  
Baron of Barons,  
He with his brother,  
Edmund Atheling,  
Gaining a lifelong  
Glory in battle,  
Slew with the sword-edge  
There by Brunanburh,  
Brake the shield-wall,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November, 1876).

Hew'd the lindenwood,<sup>1</sup>  
Hack'd the battleshield,  
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

## II.

Theirs was a greatness  
Got from their Grandsires —  
Theirs that so often in  
Strife with their enemies  
Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their  
homes.

## III.

Bow'd the spoiler,  
Bent the Scotsman,  
Fell the shipcrews  
Doom'd to the death.  
All the field with blood of the fighters  
Flow'd, from when first the great  
Sun-star of morningtide,  
Lamp of the Lord God  
Lord everlasting,  
Glode over earth till the glorious creature  
Sank to his setting.

## IV.

There lay many a man  
Marr'd by the javelin,

<sup>1</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Men of the Northland  
Shot over shield.  
There was the Scotsman  
Weary of war.

## V.

We the West-Saxons,  
Long as the daylight  
Lasted, in companies  
Troubled the track of the host that we hated,  
Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grind-  
stone,  
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

## VI.

Mighty the Mercian,  
Hard was his hand-play,  
Sparing not any of  
Those that with Anlaf,  
Warriors over the  
Weltering waters  
Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
Drew to this island:  
Doom'd to the death.

## VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,  
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII.

Then the Norse leader,  
Dire was his need of it,  
Few were his following,  
Fled to his warship :  
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it,  
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX.

Also the crafty one,  
Constantinus,  
Crept to his North again,  
Hoar-headed hero !

## X.

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
The welcome of war-knives —  
He that was reft of his  
Folk and his friends that had  
Fallen in conflict,  
Leaving his son too  
Lost in the carnage,  
Mangled to morsels,  
A youngster in war !

## XI.

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
The clash of the war-glaive —



Traitor and trickster  
And spurner of treaties —  
He nor had Anlaf  
With armies so broken  
A reason for bragging  
That they had the better  
In perils of battle  
On places of slaughter —  
The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
The wielding of weapons —  
The play that they play'd with  
The children of Edward.

## XII.

Then with their nail'd prows  
Parted the Norsemen, a  
Blood-redden'd relic of  
Javelins over  
The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,  
Shaping their way toward Dyflen<sup>2</sup> again,  
Shamed in their souls.

## XIII.

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,  
Glad of the war.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "the gathering of men."

<sup>2</sup> Dublin.

## XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it, and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

## XV.

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge—  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories—  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH.

ILIAD, xviii. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
 Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus ; and round  
 The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas flung  
 Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
 The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden cloud,  
 And from it lighted an all-shining flame.  
 As when a smoke from a city goes to heaven  
 Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
 All day the men contend in grievous war  
 From their own city, but with set of sun  
 Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the glare  
 Flies streaming, if perchance the neighbours round  
 May see, and sail to help them in the war ;  
 So from his head the splendour went to heaven.  
 From wall to dyke he stept, he stood, nor join'd  
 The Achæans — honouring his wise mother's word —  
 There standing, shouted, and Pallas far away  
 Call'd ; and a boundless panic shook the foe.  
 For like the clear voice when a trumpet shrills,  
 Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a town,  
 So rang the clear voice of Æakidês ;  
 And when the brazen cry of Æakidês

Was heard among the Trojans, all their hearts  
Were troubled, and the full-maned horses whirl'd  
The chariots backward, knowing griefs at hand;  
And sheer-astounded were the charioteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great Peleion's head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made it burn.  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and allies;  
And there and then twelve of their noblest died  
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON HER  
MARRIAGE.

O YOU that were eyes and light to the King till he  
past away  
From the darkness of life —  
He saw not his daughter — he blest her: the blind  
King sees you to-day,  
He blesses the wife.

---

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENTOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

NOT here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

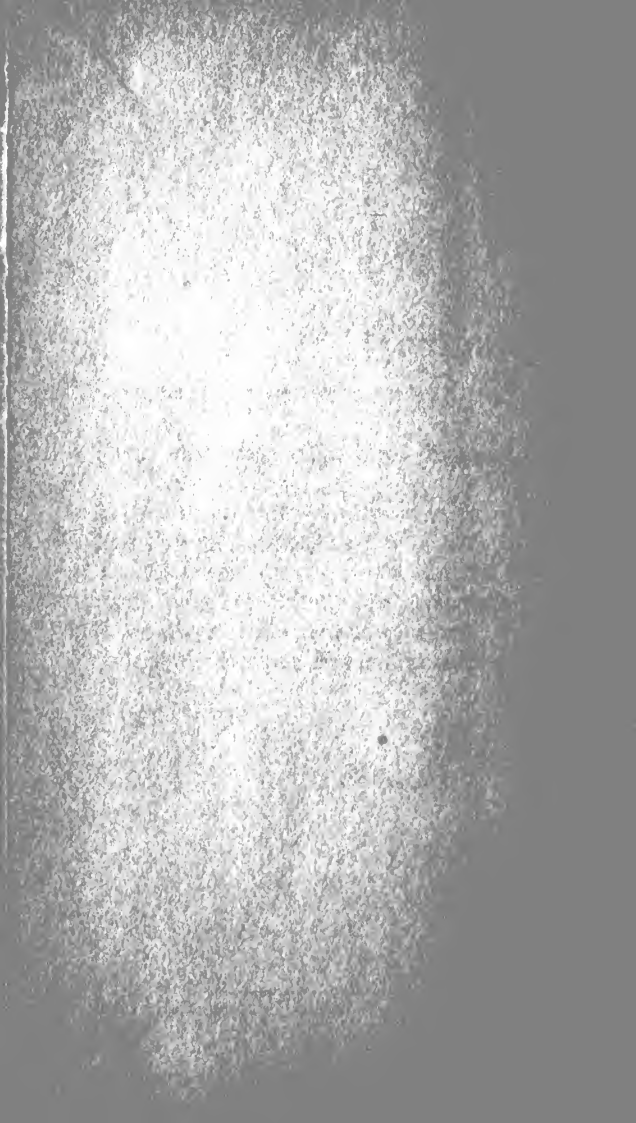
## TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and  
grown

In power, and ever growest, since thine own  
Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.









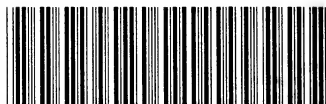
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